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BHAGWAN MALLINATH



THE STORY OF OUR NINETEENTH TIRTHANKAR

Bhagwan Mallinath

The total absence of any discrimination, on the grounds of caste, creed, colour, gender or any other physical attribute, on the path of spiritual endeavour leading to the purity of soul, is a unique Jain concept. Man or woman of higher or lower social status, of whatever skin-colour can indulge in unambiguous and faultless spiritual practices including penance, meditation, equanimity and inner discipline and lead the soul to the ultimate state of spiritual development—the state of Arihant or Siddha. With this there exists another unique concept that any mental aberration including anger, conceit and deceit tarnishes the spiritual endeavour—no matter how lofty it is. It is not only at the physical level, but also at the spiritual level—even if it is done for spiritual gains—that any influence of any of these aberrations on conduct is prohibited.

Even a little deceit or cheating for the purpose of gaining competitive excellence in the spiritual achievements tarnishes the purity of righteousness. This concept emerges out in a vivid and touching manner in the story of the life of Bhagwan Mallinath. Because of such slight aberration in the earlier birth this soul took birth as a woman. Her divine beauty and charm made her the object of attention and love for six powerful rulers. For this unparalleled beauty came marriage proposals from these six kings. The rejection of these proposals lead to a terrible war which was diplomatically avoided by the sharp intelligence of Princess Malli. Not only this, she also released the six kings from the trap of infatuation for physical beauty by making them see what obnoxious things were filled within the attractive human body. Once the lamp of spiritual light was lit each one of them accepted the spiritual path.

In the eighth chapter of the **Jnata-Sutra** this story is available in greater detail. This version has been written by Muni Shri Kirtiratna Vijay Ji and Muni Shri Hemchandra Vijay Ji, the scholarly disciples of Acharya Shri Vijay Kalapurna Surishvar Ji M. We express our gratitude for their contribution.

—**Srichand Surana 'Saras**

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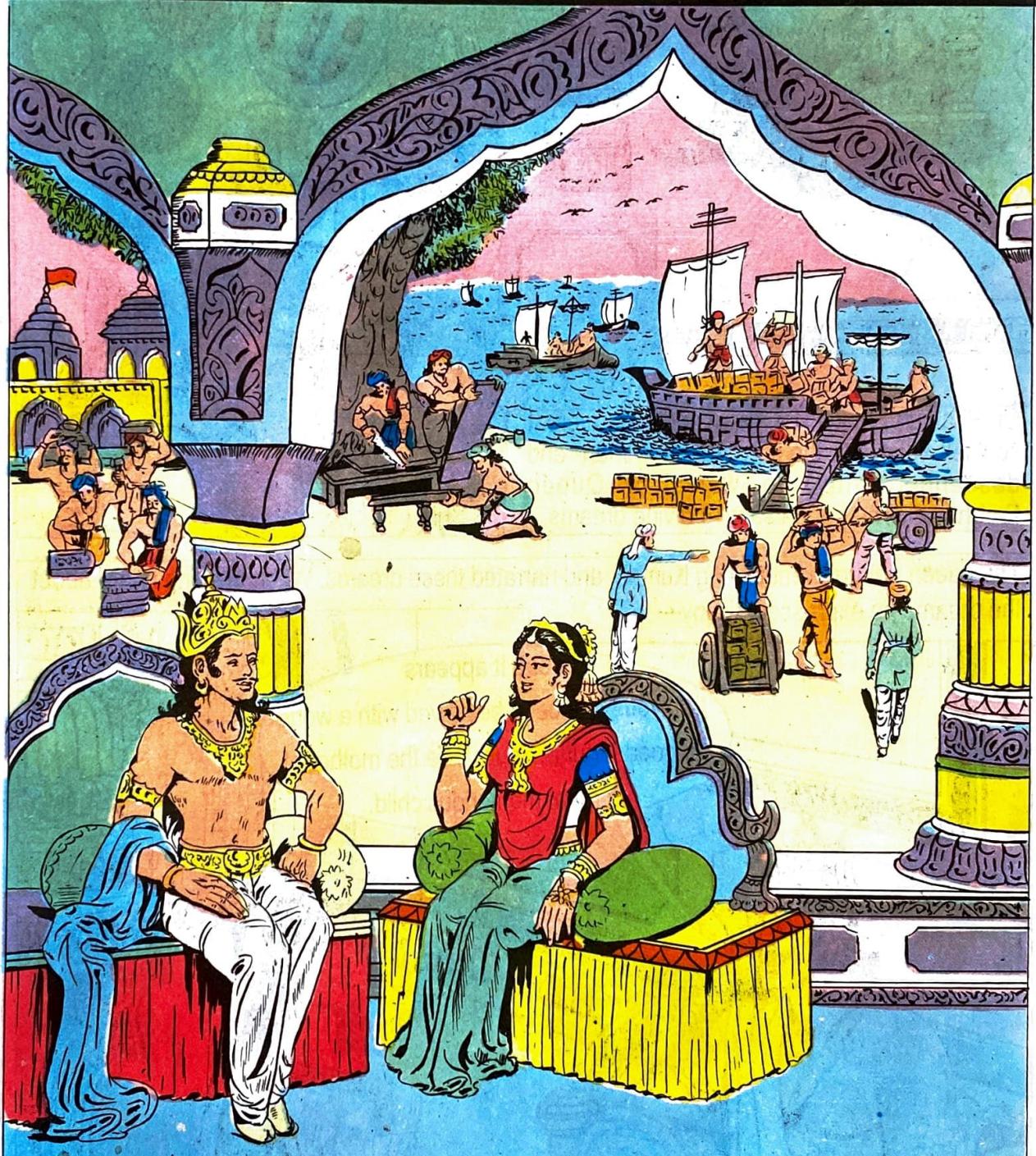
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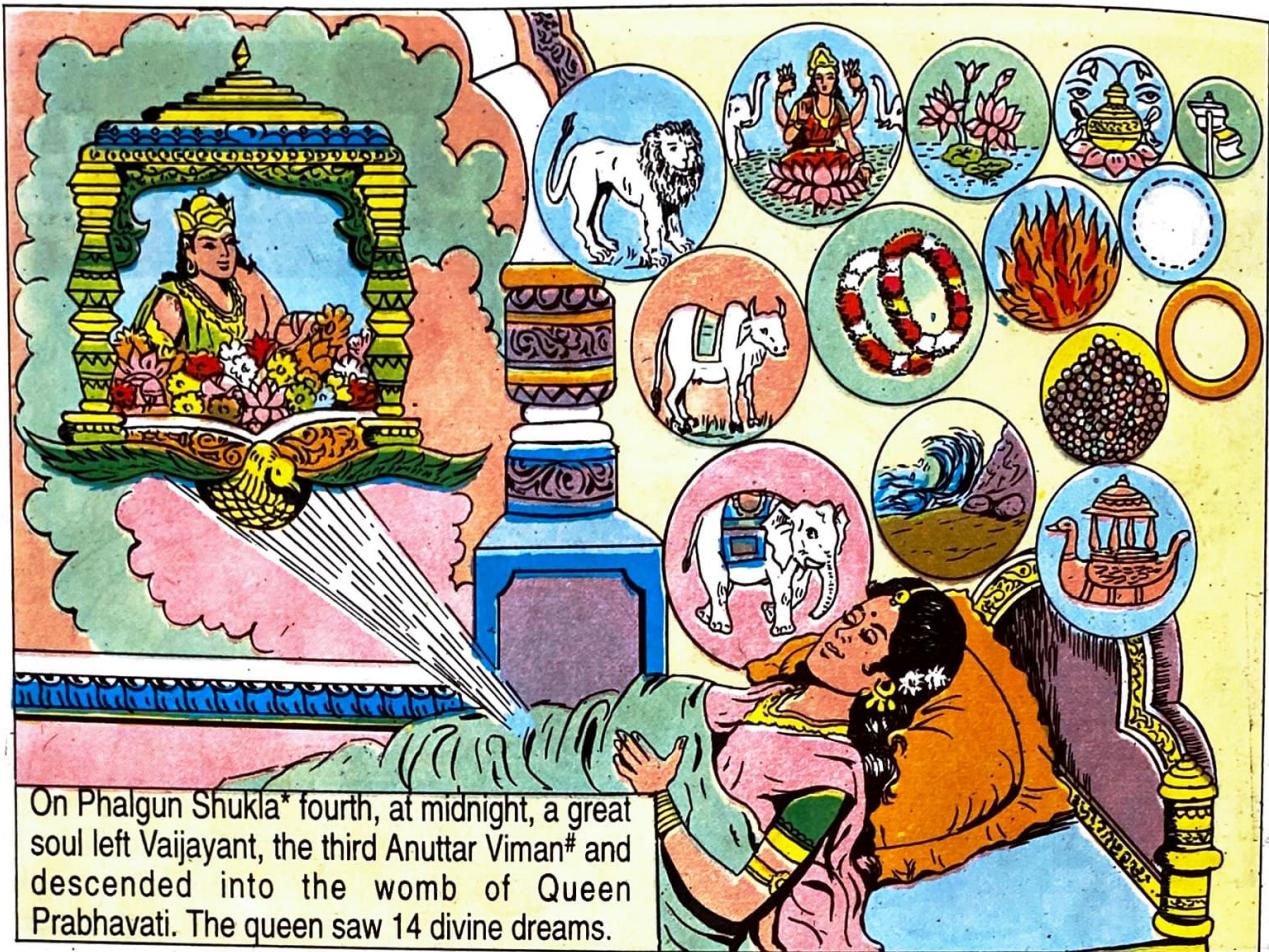
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BHAGWAN MALLINATH

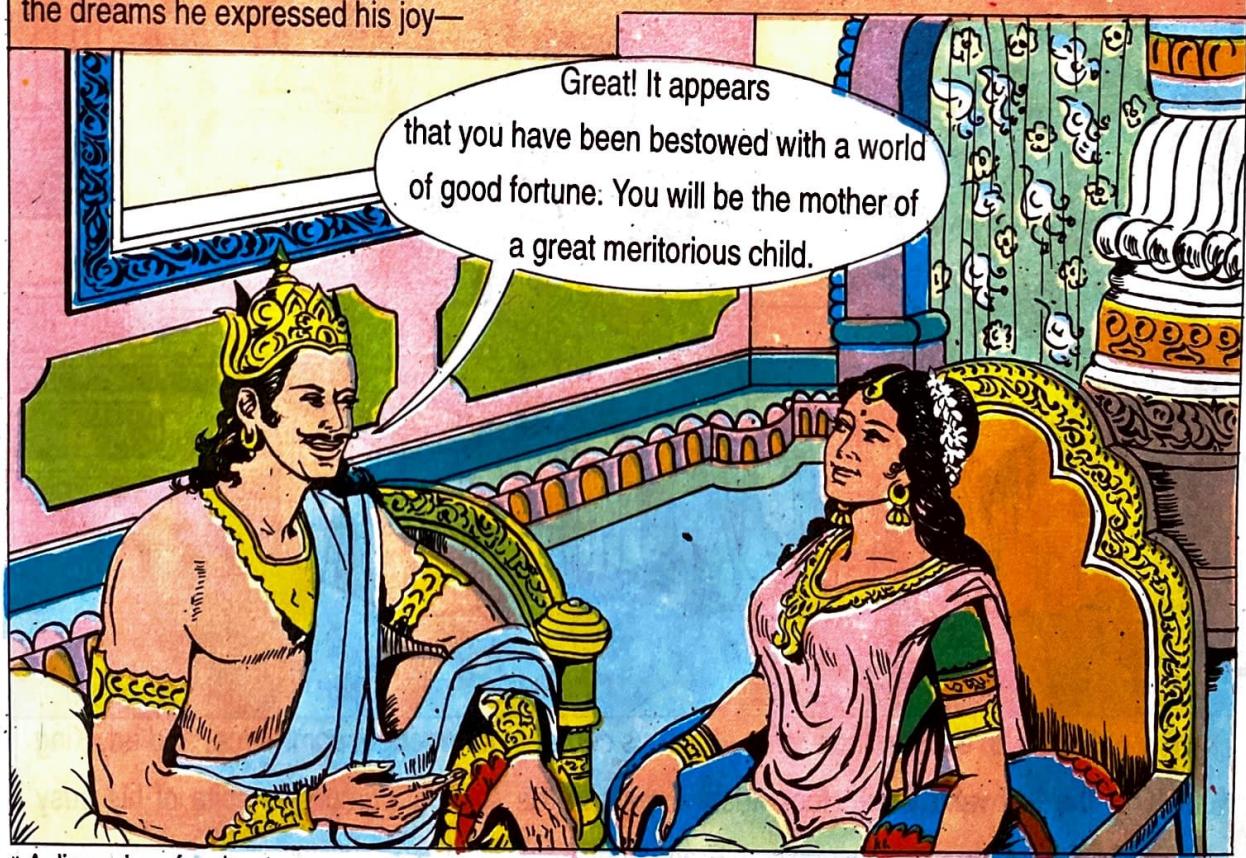


The city of Mithila, in eastern India, was a famous center of knowledge, commerce, and art. King Kumbh, of the Ikshvaku family, took keen interest in the spiritual pursuits in spite of his busy political life. The name of his Queen was Prabhavati.



On Phalgun Shukla* fourth, at midnight, a great soul left Vaijayant, the third Anuttar Vimān# and descended into the womb of Queen Prabhavati. The queen saw 14 divine dreams.

The queen got up, went to king Kumbh, and narrated these dreams. When the king heard about the dreams he expressed his joy—



A dimension of gods.

* The bright half of a month.

In the morning the king called the dream diviners to learn about the dreams—



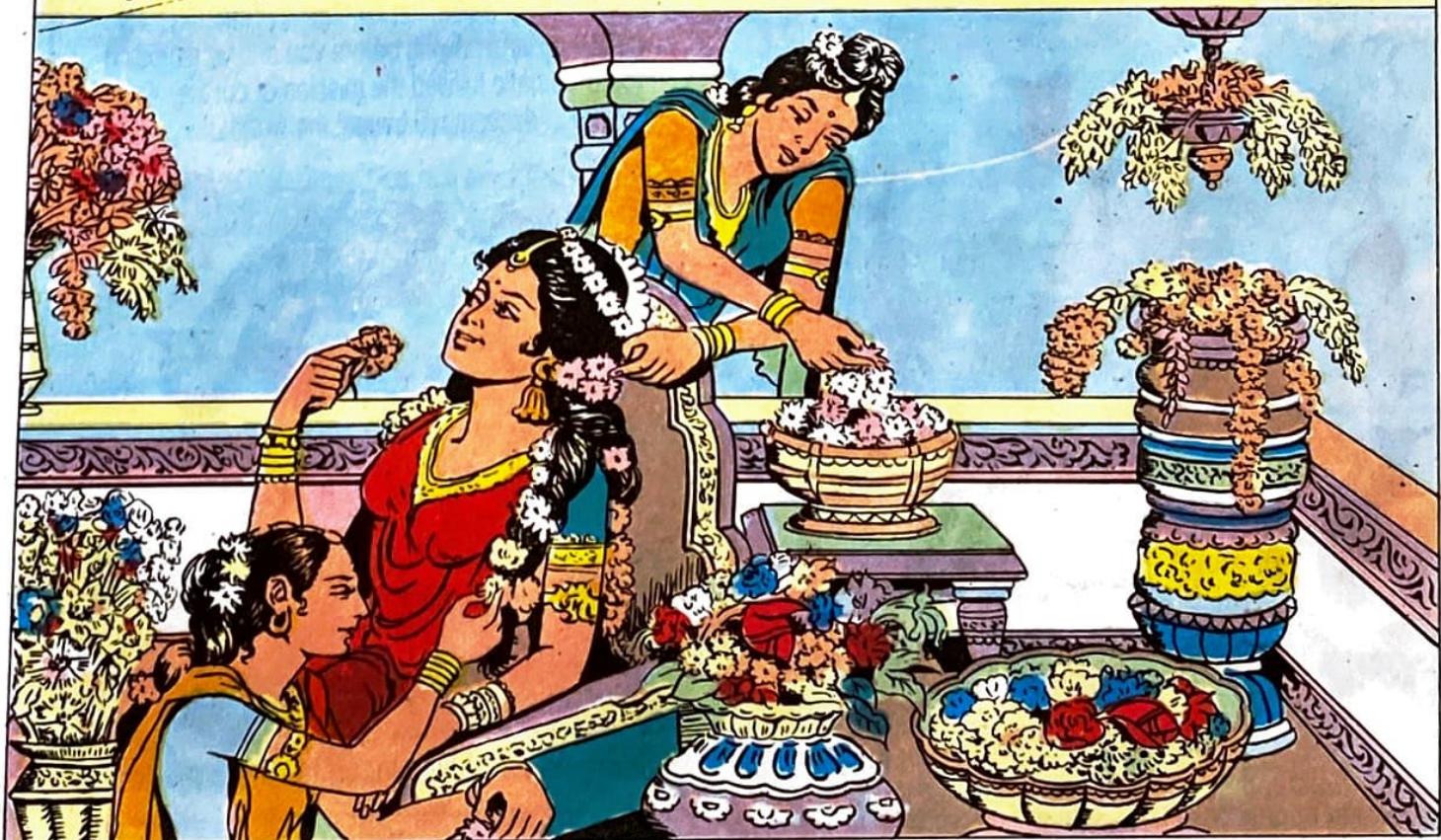
Sire! The woman who sees such bountiful dreams gives birth to a Tirthankar # or a Chakravarti.*

During the third month of her pregnancy the queen had a desire and she conveyed it to the king—



Extremely pleased, the king duly honoured the dream diviners and bid them farewell.

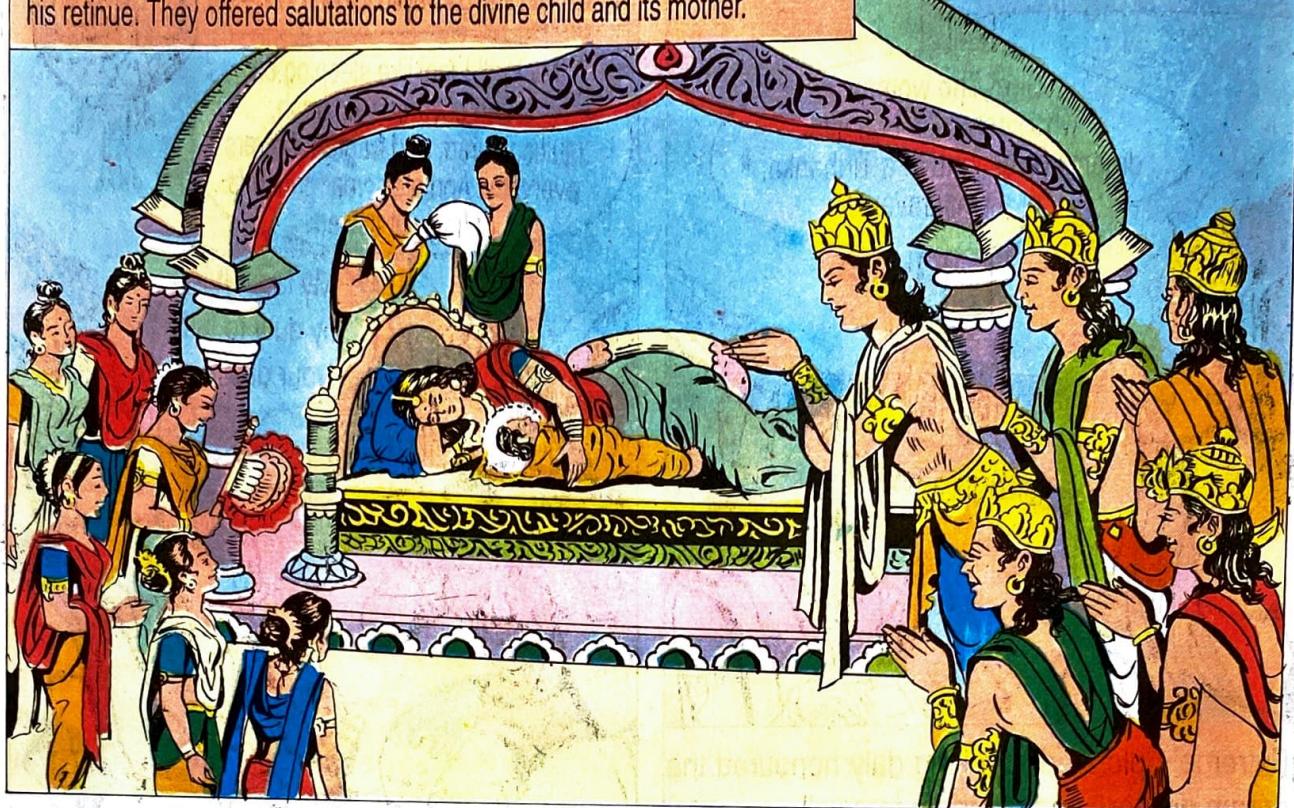
On the king's order the maids everyday decorated the queen's bed with fresh flowers. They embellished her hairdo with the fragrant Champa and Jasmine flowers. Her chamber always remained redolent with multicoloured bouquets.



Propagator of Jain religion.

* Monarch of the six continents.

On an auspicious night the queen gave birth to a daughter. With the birth of the child the world was filled with a unique glow and joy. The eight Disha Kumaris* arrived and performed the post birth rituals. Then came the King of gods and his retinue. They offered salutations to the divine child and its mother.



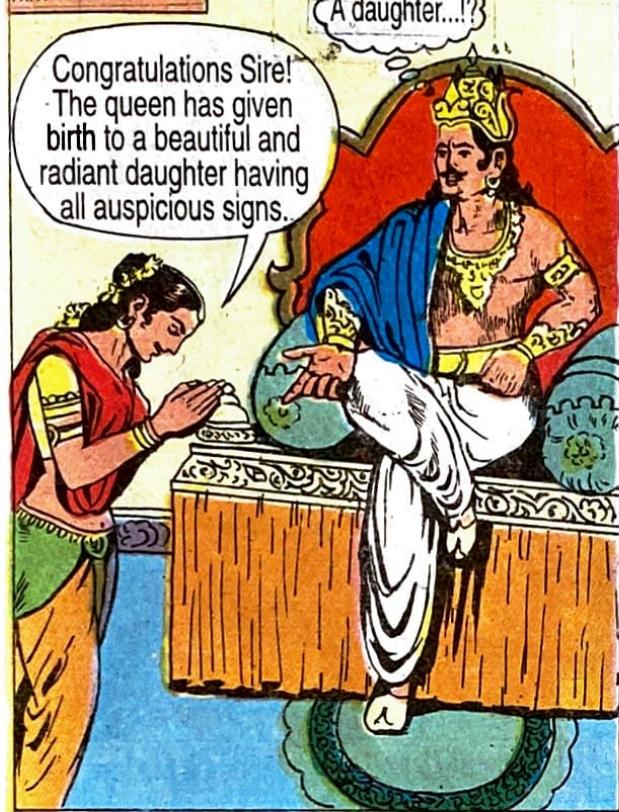
Later, Indra transformed himself into five forms and took the newborn to Meru mountain. Millions of gods performed the post birth anointing. After applying divine perfume Indra prayed with devotion—



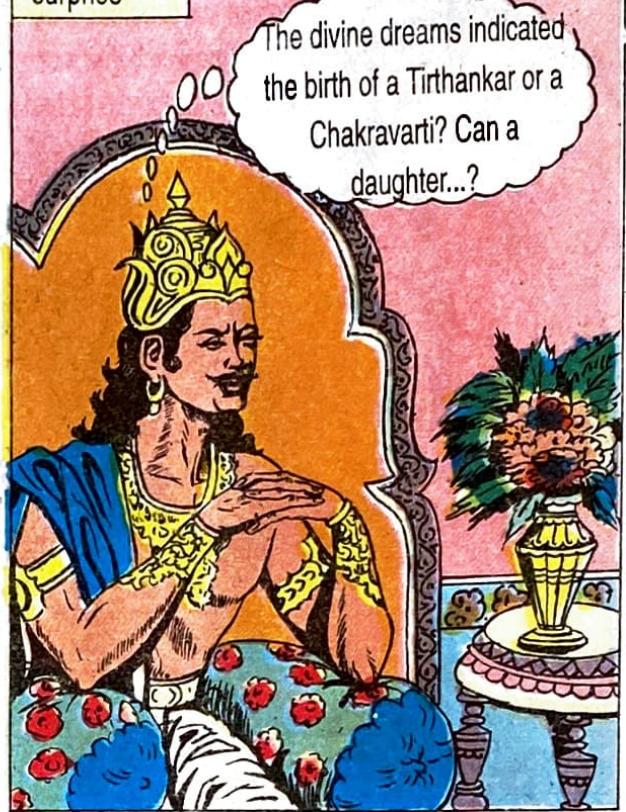
Then they brought the infant and carefully placed her near the mother.

* Guardian angels of the cardinal directions.

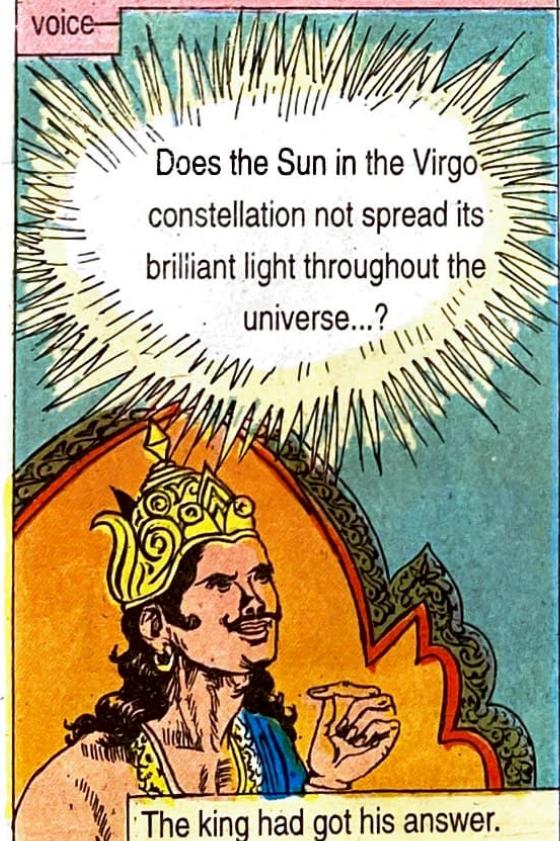
In the morning a maid came to the king and congratulated him—



The word 'daughter' made King Kumbh ponder in surprise—

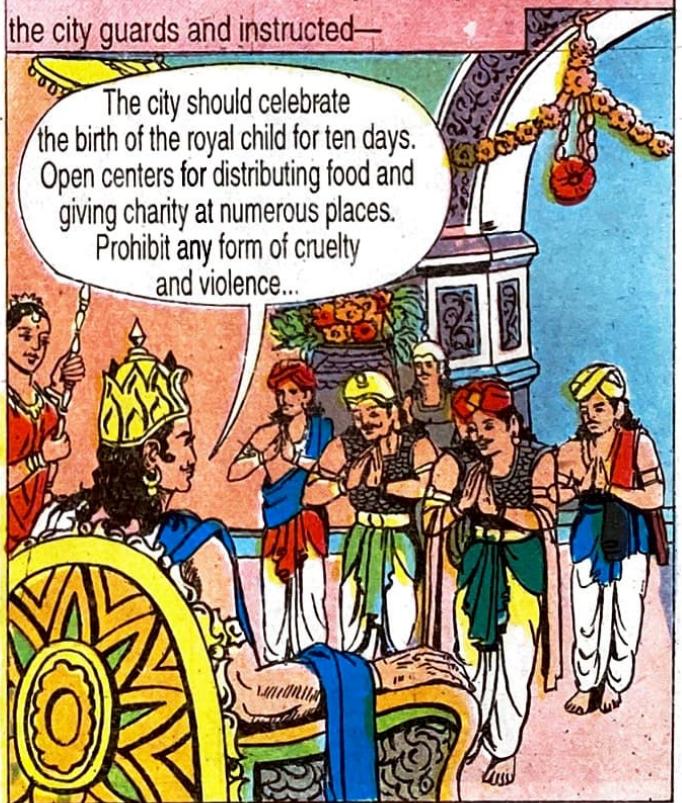


And suddenly he felt as if he heard a divine voice—



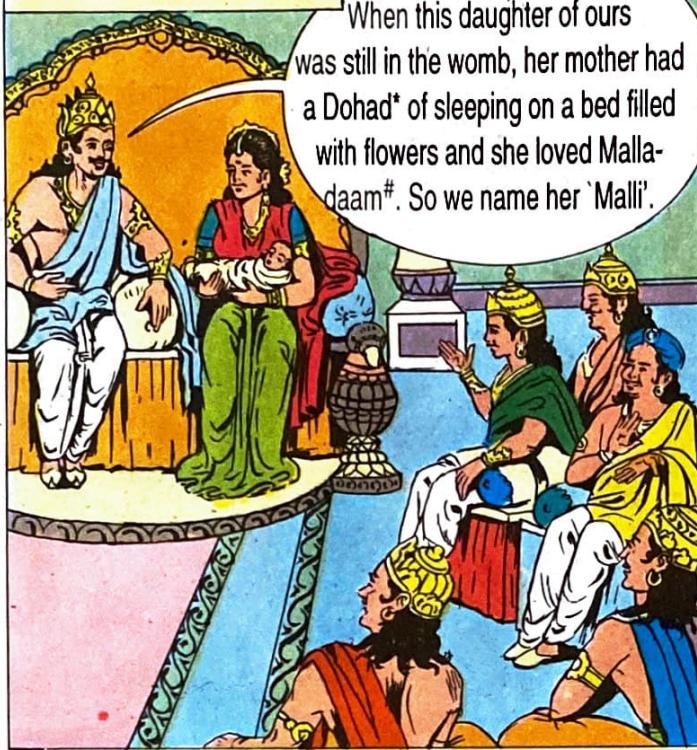
The king had got his answer.

He was intoxicated with joy. Soon joyous birth- celebrations started in the royal family. The king called the city guards and instructed—



.A few days later the naming ceremony was performed. King Kumbh said to his relatives and friends—

When this daughter of ours was still in the womb, her mother had a Dohad* of sleeping on a bed filled with flowers and she loved Malla-daam#. So we name her 'Malli'.



All present affirmed the king's idea with joy.

A few years later queen Prabhavati gave birth to a beautiful son. Intoxicated with joy the queen asked the king—



The prince became famous as Malladinna

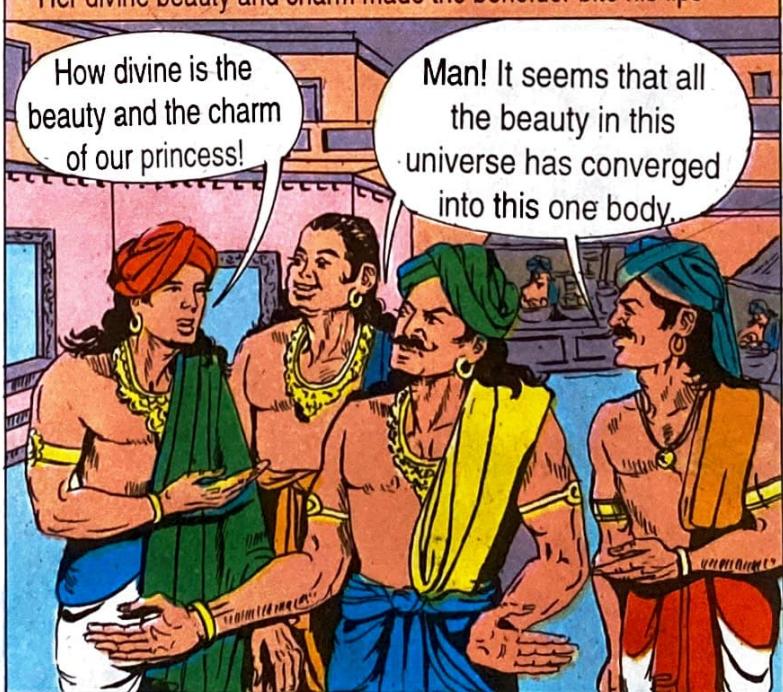
By the time Princess Malli completed her education she grew to be a young woman.



Her divine beauty and charm made the beholder bite his lips—

How divine is the beauty and the charm of our princess!

Man! It seems that all the beauty in this universe has converged into this one body.



Slowly the astonishing beauty and charm of Princess Malli became a topic of discussion in various states around Mithila. Anyone who heard about it got astonished.

* Pregnancy desire.

Flower bouquet.

During that period the king of Saket city was Pratibuddhi. There was an ancient miraculous temple of a serpent-god in Saket. One day queen Padmavati said to the king—



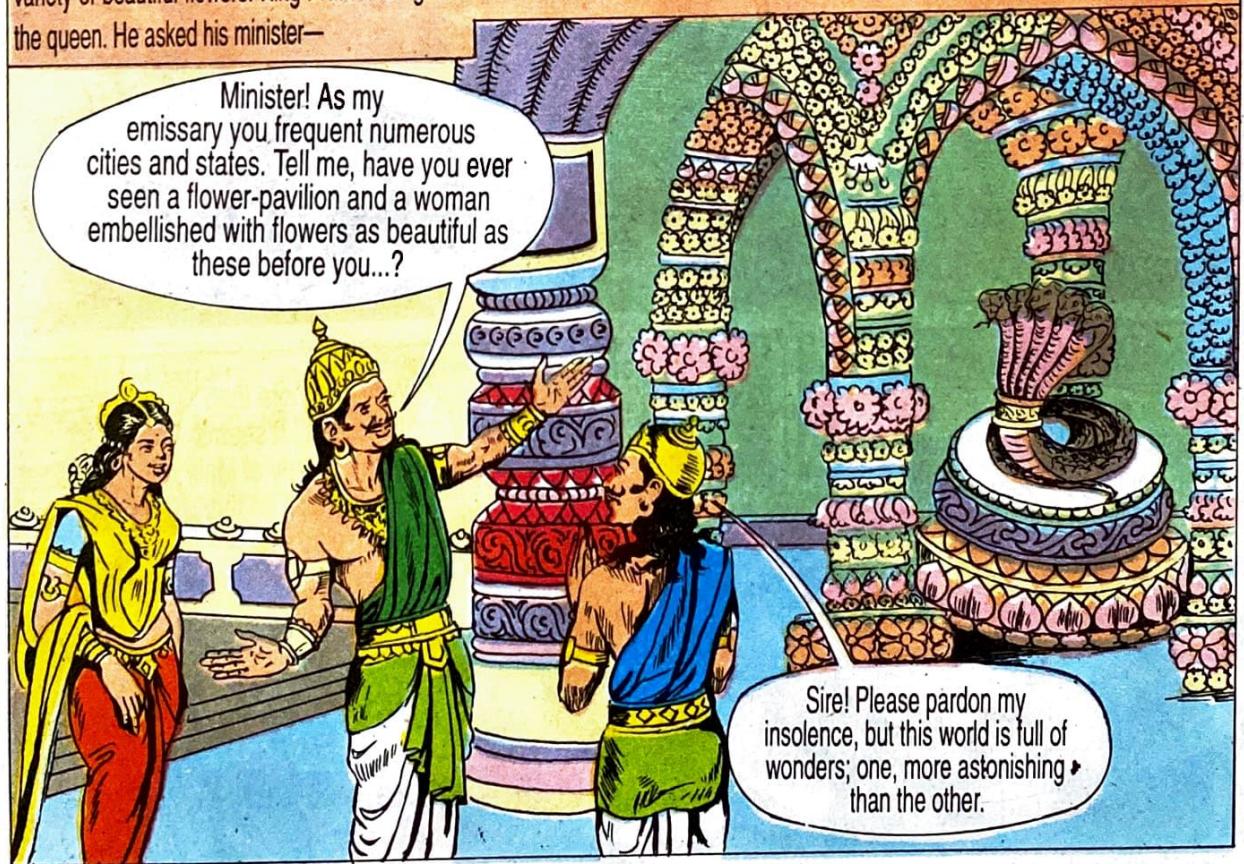
The king instructed his servants—

The queen wants to go for worship in the Serpent-god temple. Go and make a beautiful pavilion with flowers. It should have enchanting flower decoration hitherto unseen...



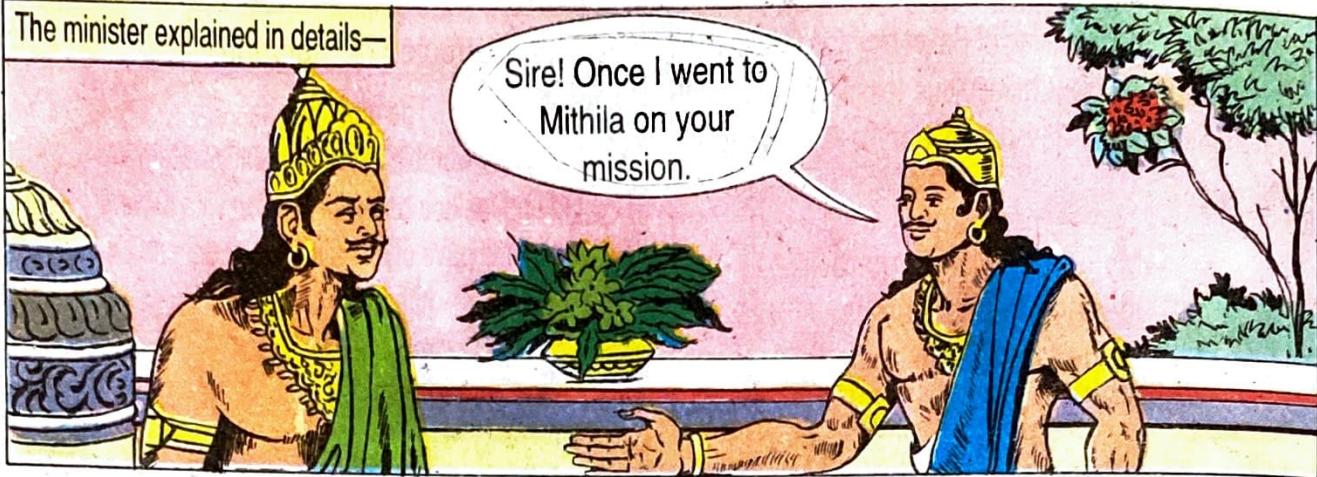
The king's staff and artists raised a unique and beautiful flower pavilion. Queen Padmavati arrived in the temple adorning herself with a variety of beautiful flowers. King Pratibuddhi got enchanted when he looked at the beautiful flower pavilion and the attractive make up of the queen. He asked his minister—

Minister! As my emissary you frequent numerous cities and states. Tell me, have you ever seen a flower-pavilion and a woman embellished with flowers as beautiful as these before you...?

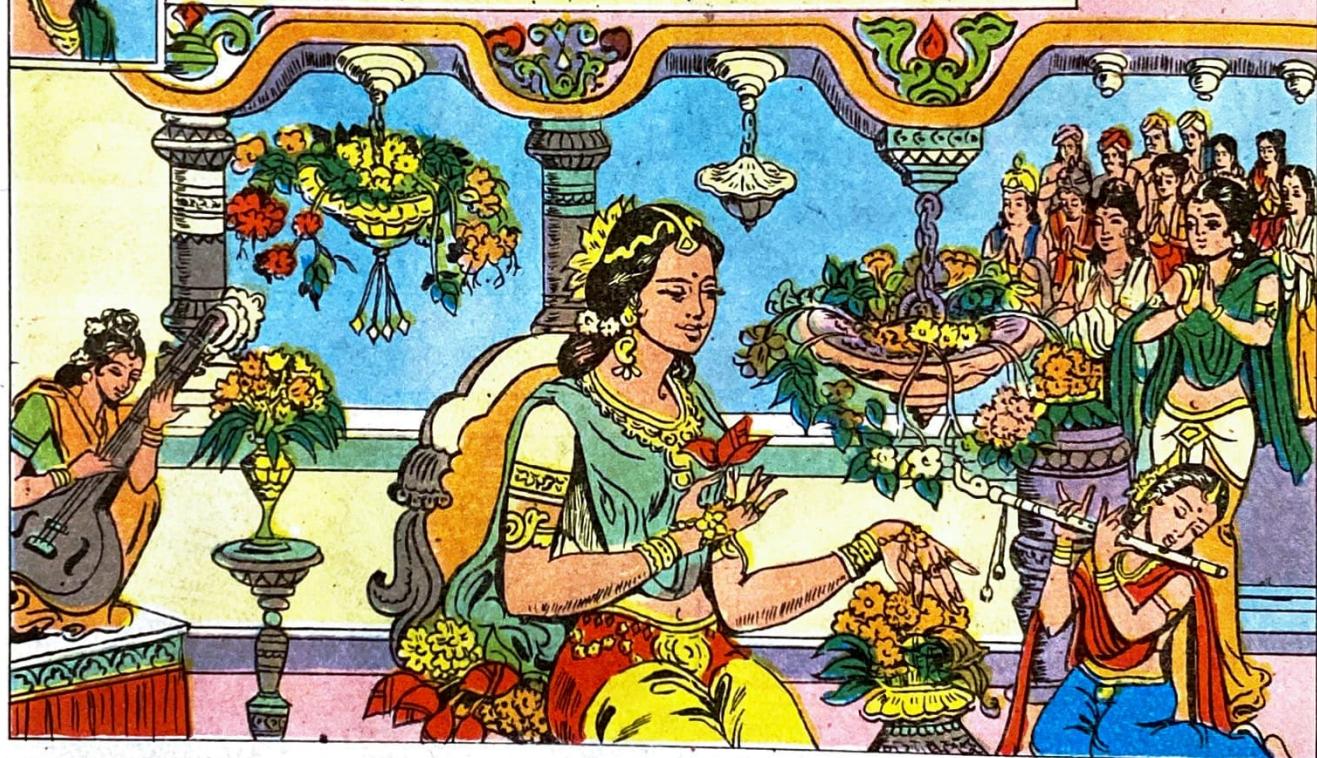


The minister explained in details—

Sire! Once I went to
Mithila on your
mission.

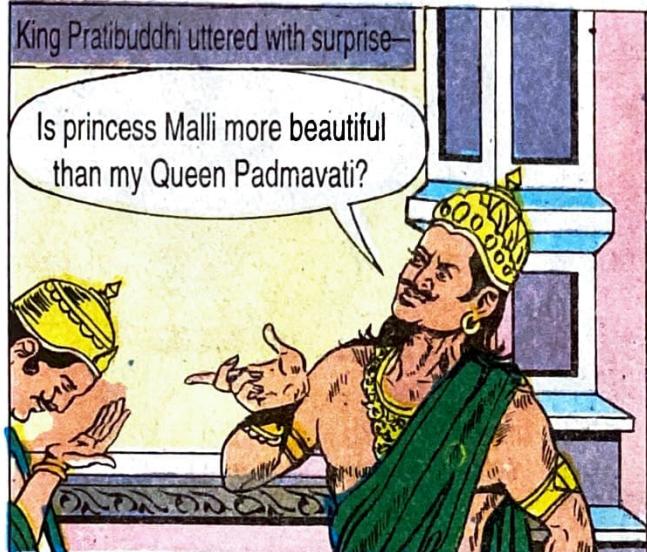


There, during Princess Malli's* birthday celebration, I saw the most enchanting flower decoration and the divine beauty of the princess. It is impossible to put them in words.

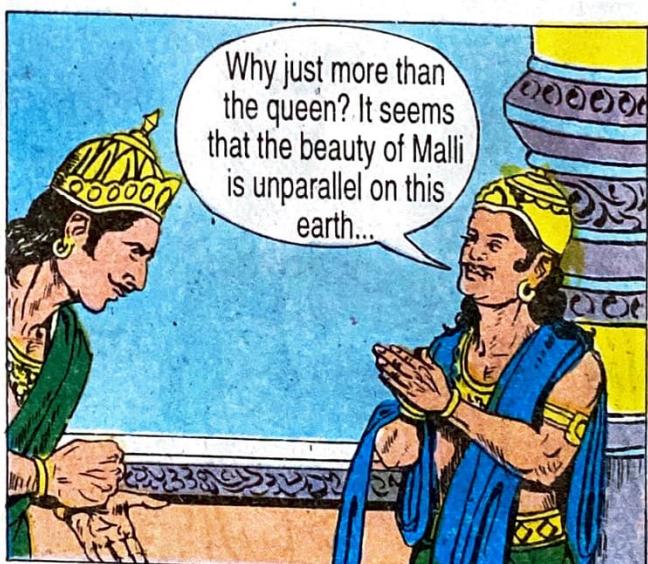


King Pratibuddhi uttered with surprise—

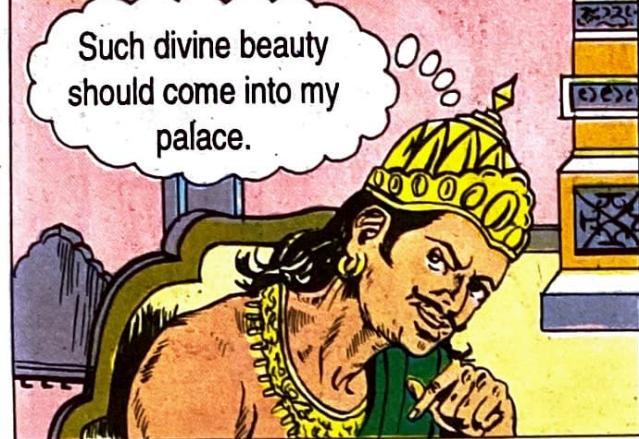
Is princess Malli more beautiful
than my Queen Padmavati?



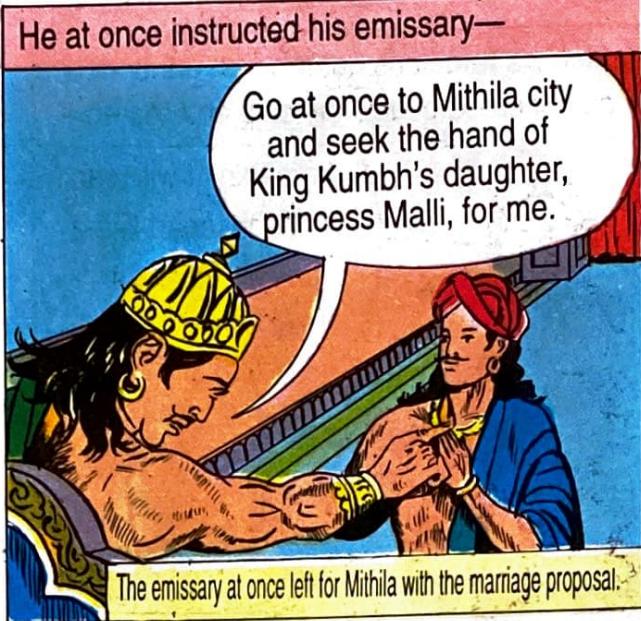
Why just more than
the queen? It seems
that the beauty of Malli
is unparalleled on this
earth...



This description of the beauty of Princess Malli evoked a feeling of a strange fondness and love in the mind of Pratibuddhi. He thought—



He at once instructed his emissary—



The emissary at once left for Mithila with the marriage proposal.

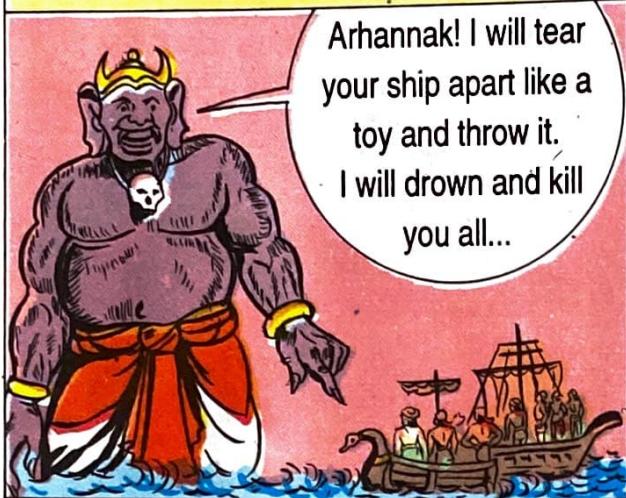
In Champa city lived a sea-faring merchant named Arhannak. He was a staunch follower of Jain religion and a great devotee of the Jina. One day he set out on a sea voyage with many other merchants.



A few days later his ship arrived in the Arabian sea. One day they were caught in a storm. The sky was filled with dense clouds, lightening and thunder. The bright day had turned into a dark night.



Suddenly a ferocious demon with a thundering laugh appeared before the ship and roared—

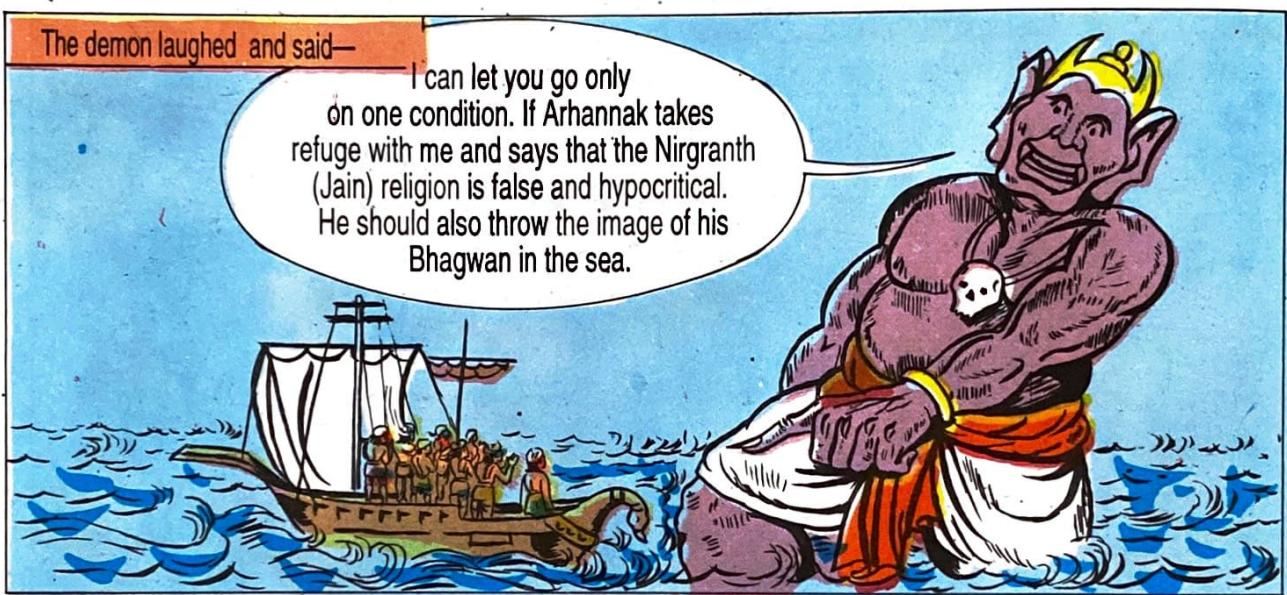


The passengers joined their palms and appealed—



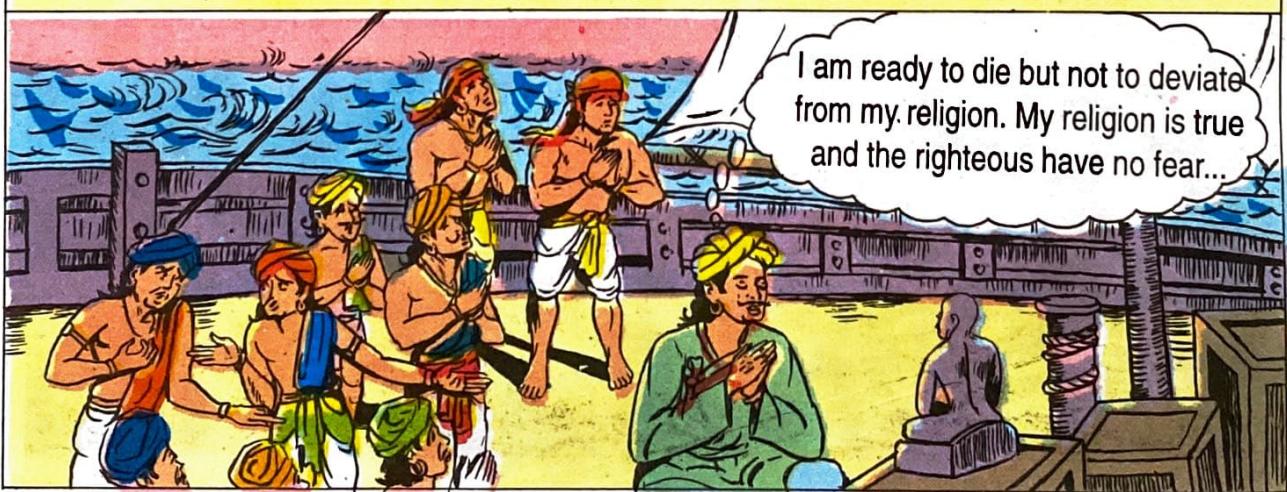
The demon laughed and said—

I can let you go only on one condition. If Arhannak takes refuge with me and says that the Nirgranth (Jain) religion is false and hypocritical. He should also throw the image of his Bhagwan in the sea.



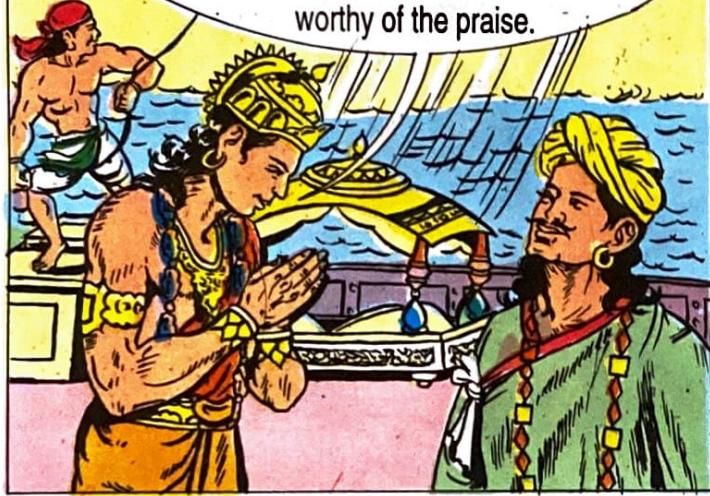
The passengers tried to persuade Arhannak to agree to this but he did not relent. He continued to meditate calmly, with closed eyes, sitting fearlessly before the image of his Bhagwan. He resolved—

I am ready to die but not to deviate from my religion. My religion is true and the righteous have no fear...



The torment continued but Arhannak was steadfast. After sometime the storm subsided. A divine form descended from the sky, greeted Arhannak and said—

O saint! I have tortured you much, please pardon me. In the heavens Indra had praised your unwavering faith. I created all this horror in order to test that, and you have passed with flying colours. You are worthy of the praise.



The god presented two pairs of divine earrings to Arhannak—

O great one! Please accept this humble gift.

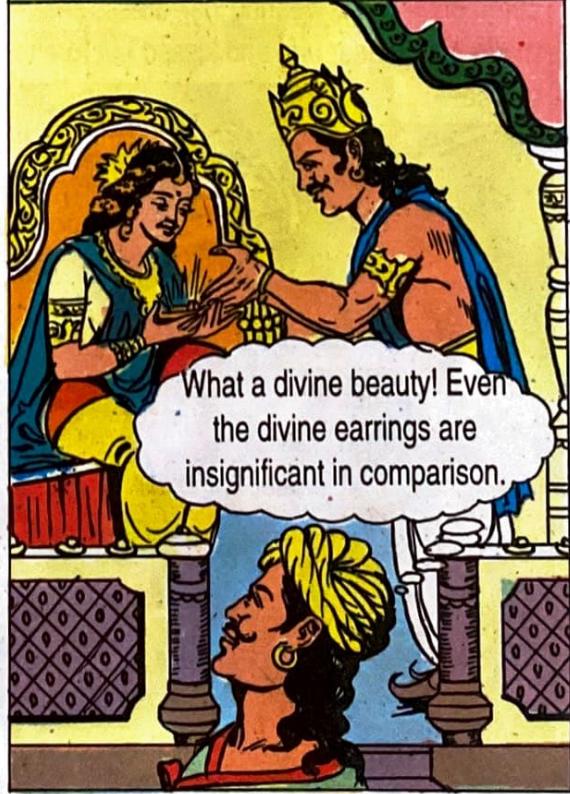


After this the god left.

A few days later Arhannak's ship arrived at Mithila. Arhannak gifted one pair of the divine earrings to King Kumbh.



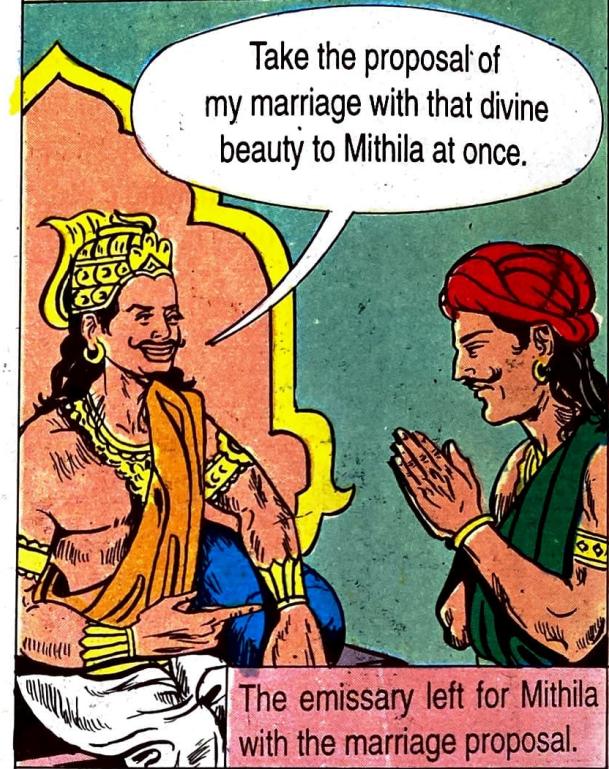
King Kumbh in turn presented the pair of earrings to his dear daughter Malli. Arhannak also saw the princess—



A few days later all the passengers including Arhannak returned to Champa city. Arhannak presented the other pair of divine earrings to King Chandracchaya. Narrating his experiences he said—



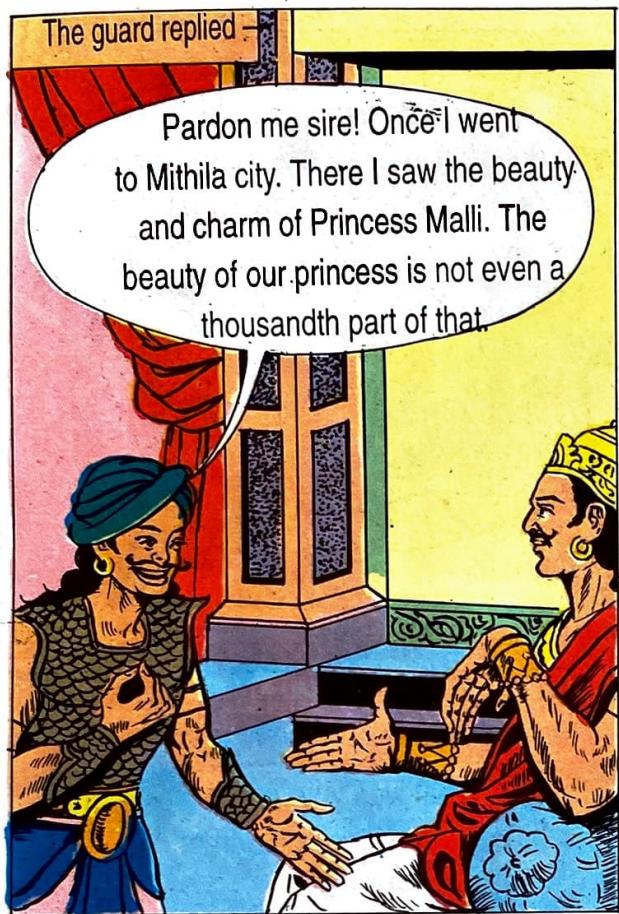
The description of the beauty of princess Malli filled Chandracchaya with exhilaration. He called his emissary and instructed—



The emissary left for Mithila with the marriage proposal.

Subahu was the daughter of King Rukmi of Shravasti. She was beautiful like a divine damsel. Once after a ceremonial bath, wearing her dress, ornaments, and a flower-garland, she came to her father. The king made her sit near him and kissed her forehead with affection. He then proudly asked the senior guard of his palace—





King Kumbh was annoyed with this answer. He said—

Are you goldsmiths or not? If you don't have even this much skill you are not fit to stay in my kingdom.

The angry king exiled all those expert goldsmiths.

The exiled goldsmiths left Mithila and in search of their livelihood came to Varanasi. They went to the court of king Shankh and sought his patronage—

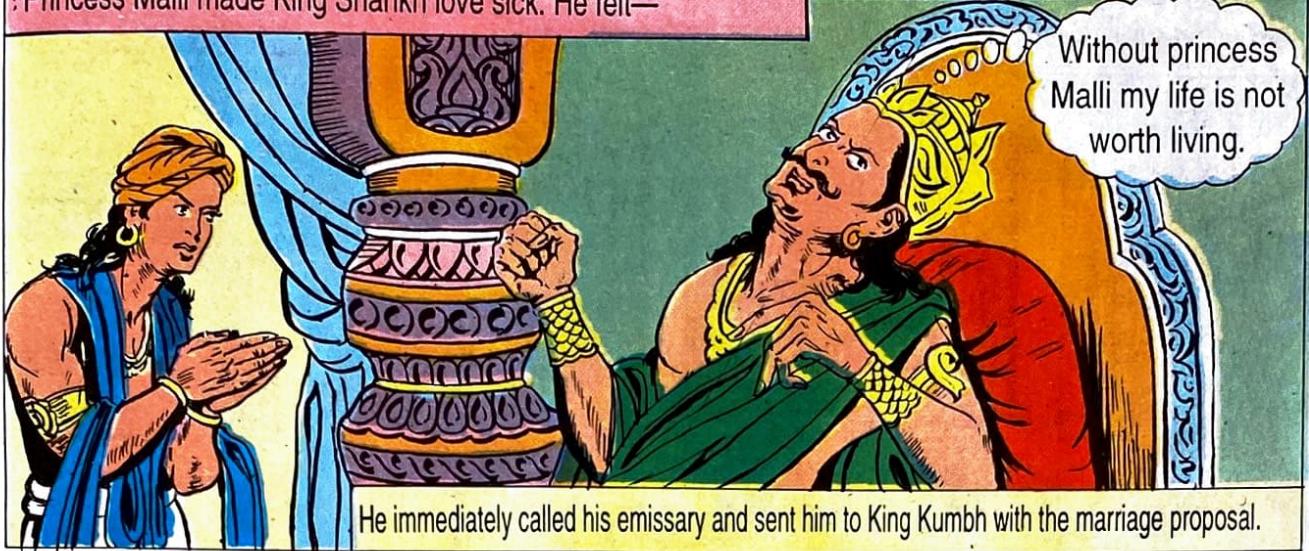
Sire! We are the exiled goldsmiths from Mithila and want refuge in your city.

What was your crime that you were exiled from Mithila?

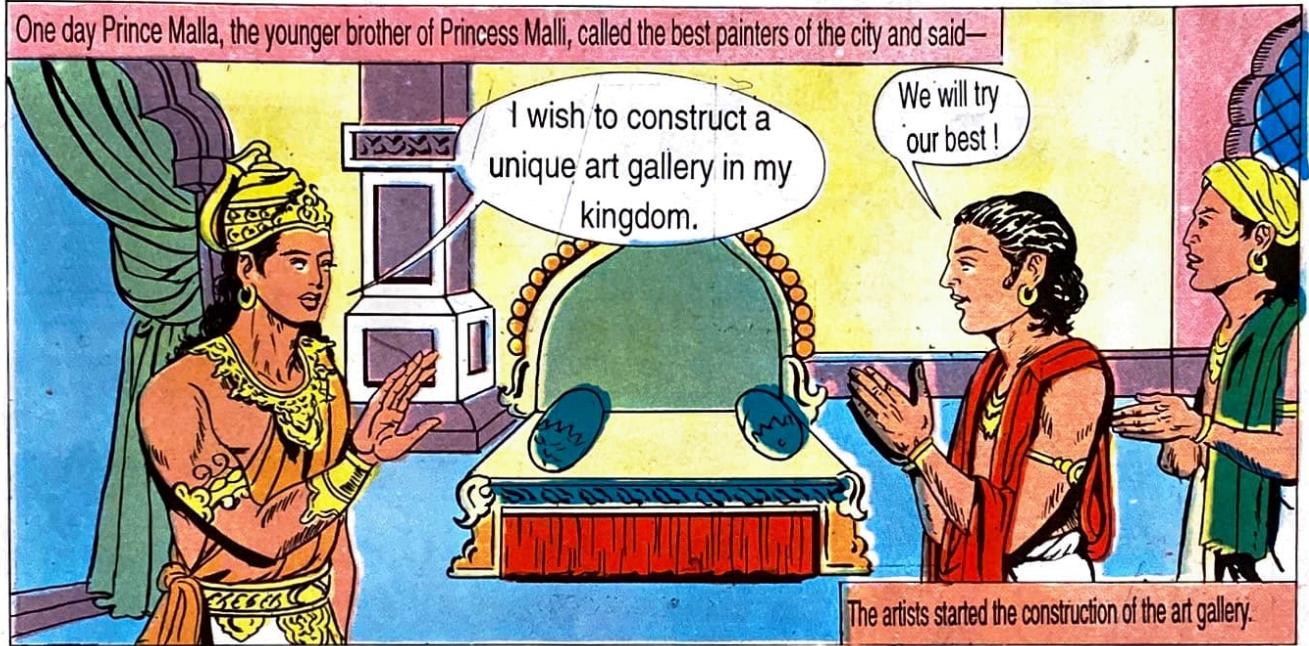
The goldsmiths narrated their story and added—

Sire! Like the divine earrings the beauty and charm of princess Malli is also divine. Even sun rays appear dull before her radiant beauty.

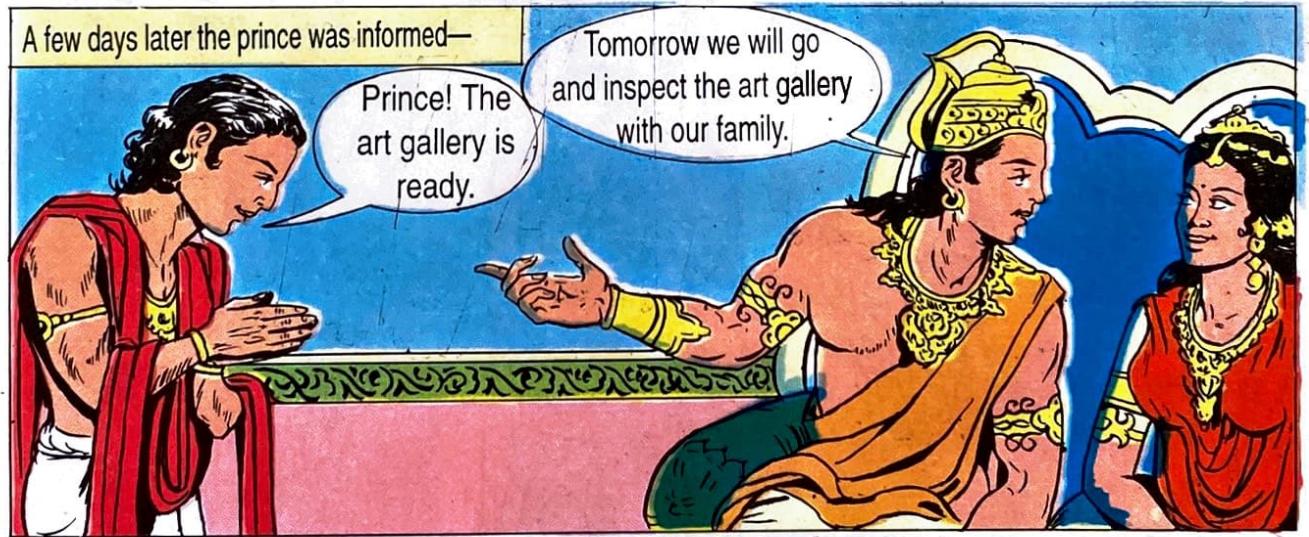
As the mouth starts watering at mere mention of lemon, the mention of the name of Princess Malli made King Shankh love sick. He felt—



One day Prince Malla, the younger brother of Princess Malli, called the best painters of the city and said—



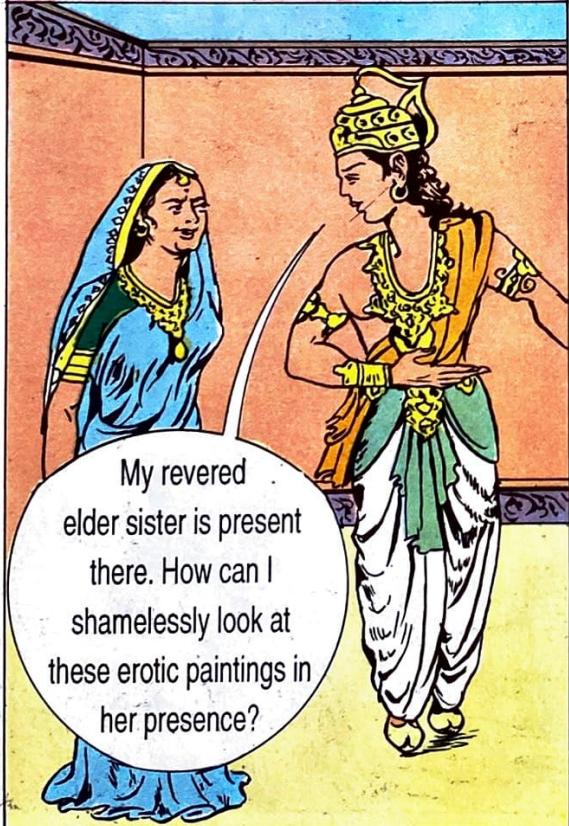
A few days later the prince was informed—



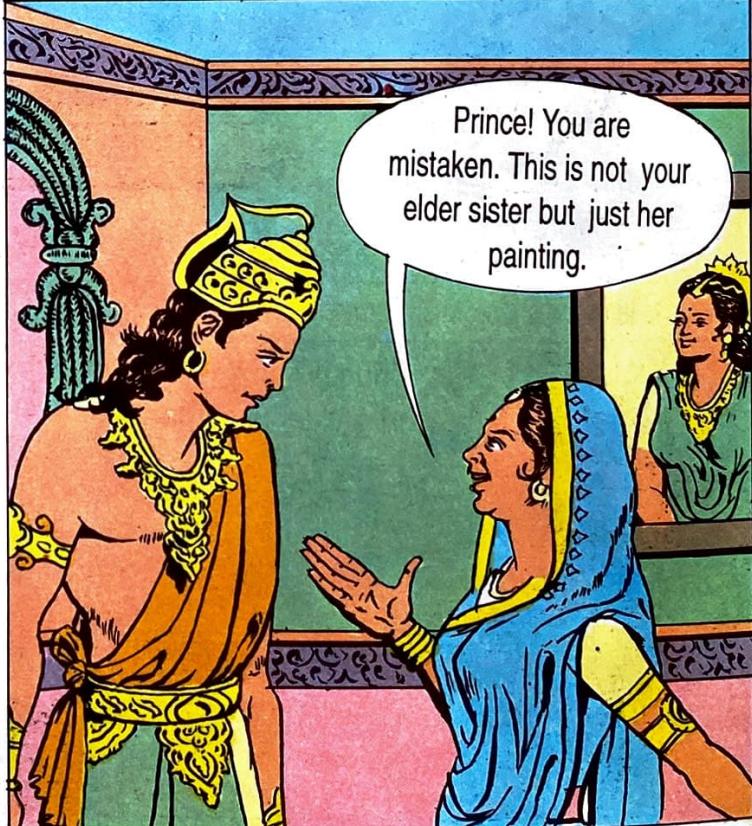
Next day the prince and his wives visited the art gallery. Every one enjoyed the paintings on a variety of themes including the erotic ones. All of a sudden the prince looked at a painting on a wall and was taken aback—



When his governess enquired, the prince said—



The governess carefully examined and smiled—



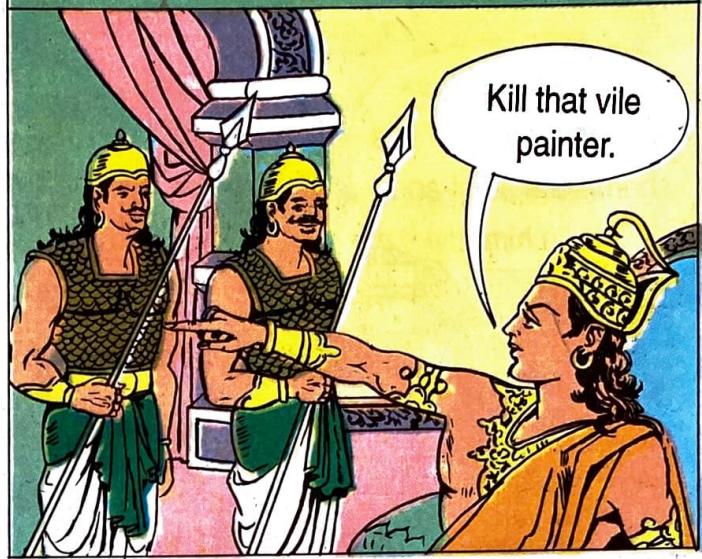
At this the prince was lost in his reverie—

Who is this insolent artist? He has created an exact and true to life replica of every part of my sister's body? And how could he?



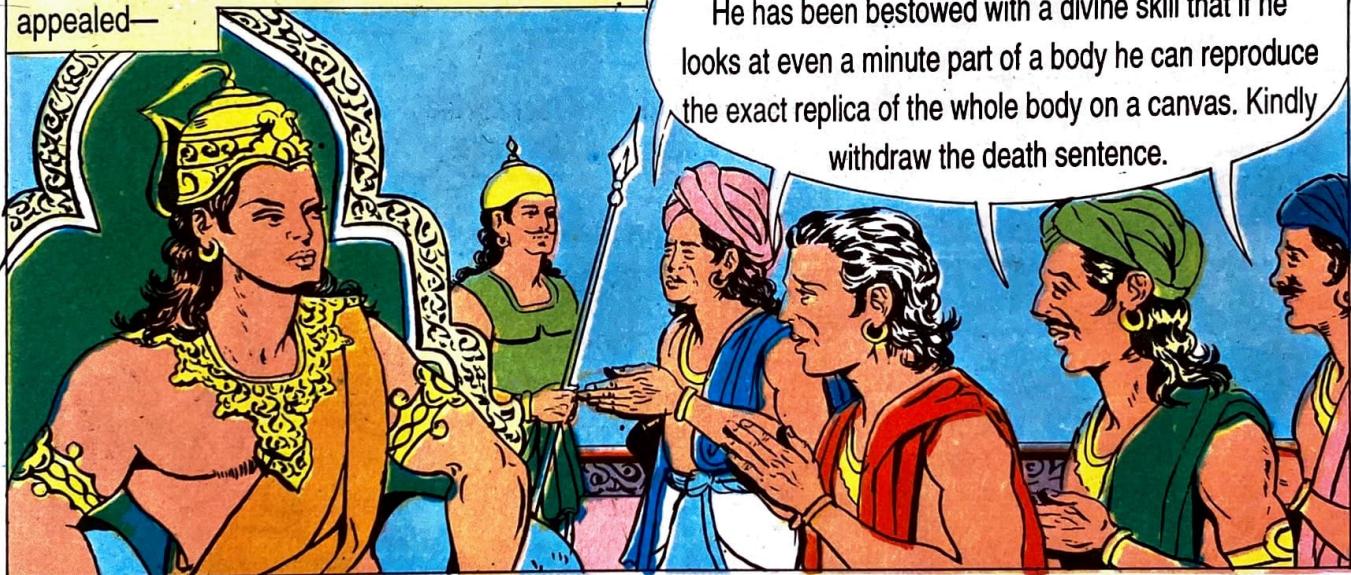
He lost his temper and instructed his guards—

Kill that vile painter.



At this command the other artists present there appealed—

Prince! This is not the mistake of this poor artist. He has been bestowed with a divine skill that if he looks at even a minute part of a body he can reproduce the exact replica of the whole body on a canvas. Kindly withdraw the death sentence.

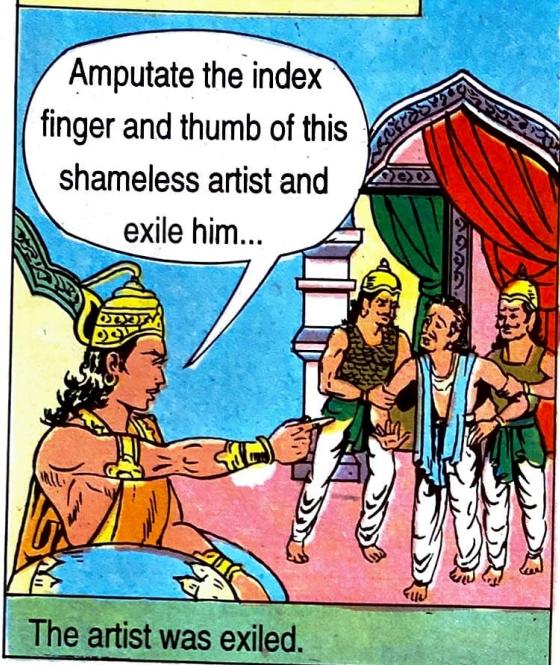


The prince called the artist and rebuked him. The artist submitted—

Prince! Kindly pardon me. Once I saw the toe of Princess Malli from behind a curtain. On that basis I created this painting. This is not my mistake but my art.

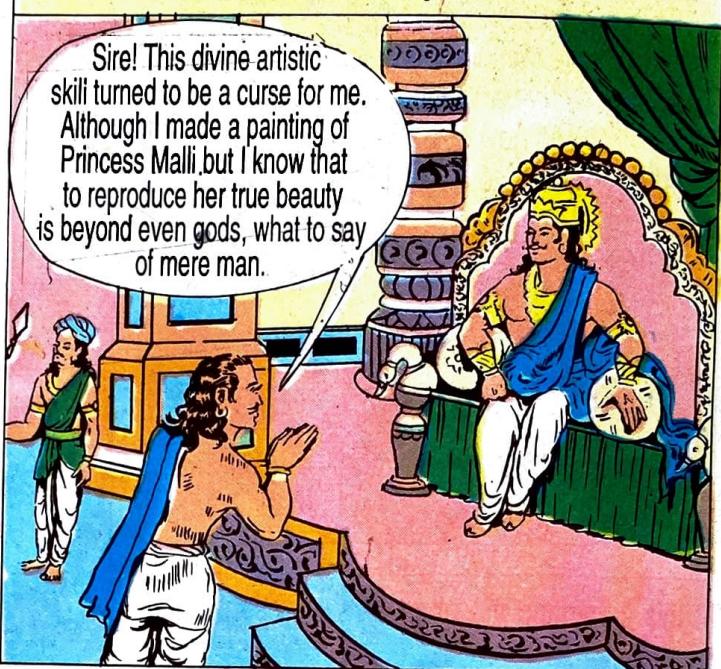


But this did not pacify Malladinna. He instructed the soldiers—

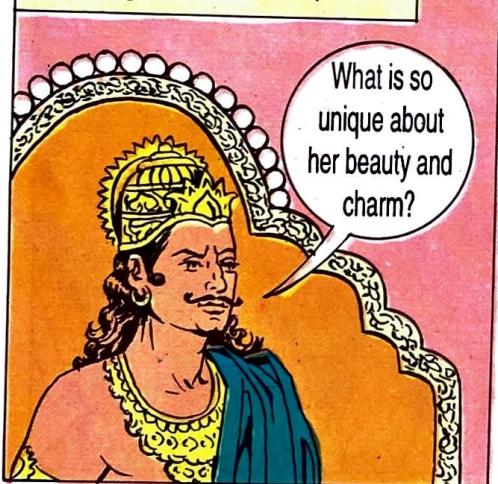


The artist was exiled.

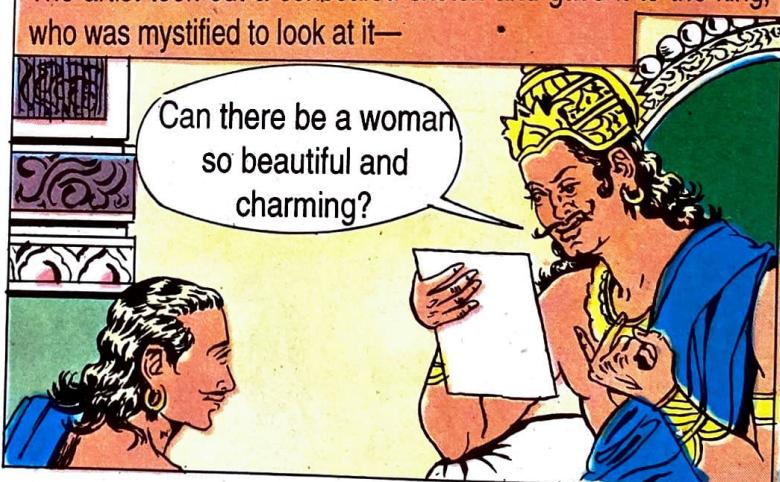
The exiled artist wandered and reached the court of King Adinshatru of Hastinapur. He told his story to the king and added—



The king asked with surprise—



The artist took out a concealed sketch and gave it to the king, who was mystified to look at it—

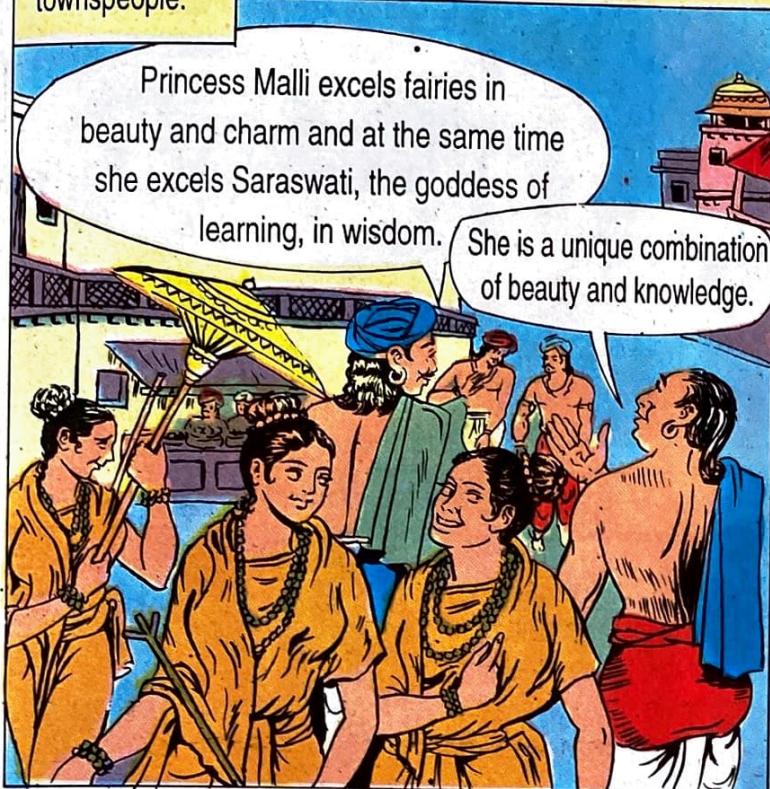


The king at once called a messenger—



The messenger left for Mithila.

Once a Parivrajika* named Choksha came to Mithila city with her disciples. She heard praise of princess Malli from the townspeople.



Choksha thought—

If I can impress Princess Malli, the town of Mithila will come under my influence.

Choksha came into the palace of Princess Malli and started preaching her religion. Princess Malli asked—



Choksha said—

The basic tenet of our religion is cleansing. To cleanse with the help of sand and water, to take bath at the pilgrimage centers, and give charity. This leads to salvation and heaven.



* A nun belonging to a particular sect.

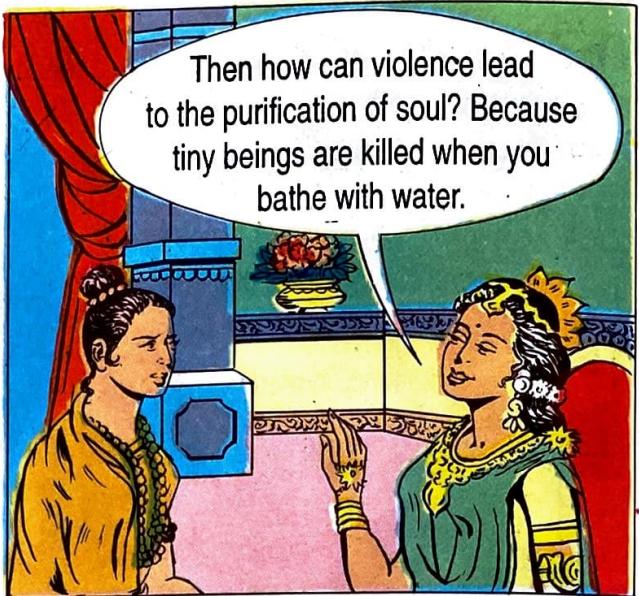
Princess Malli asked—

If you wash a blood stained cloth with blood, would the stain disappear?

No, that is not possible.

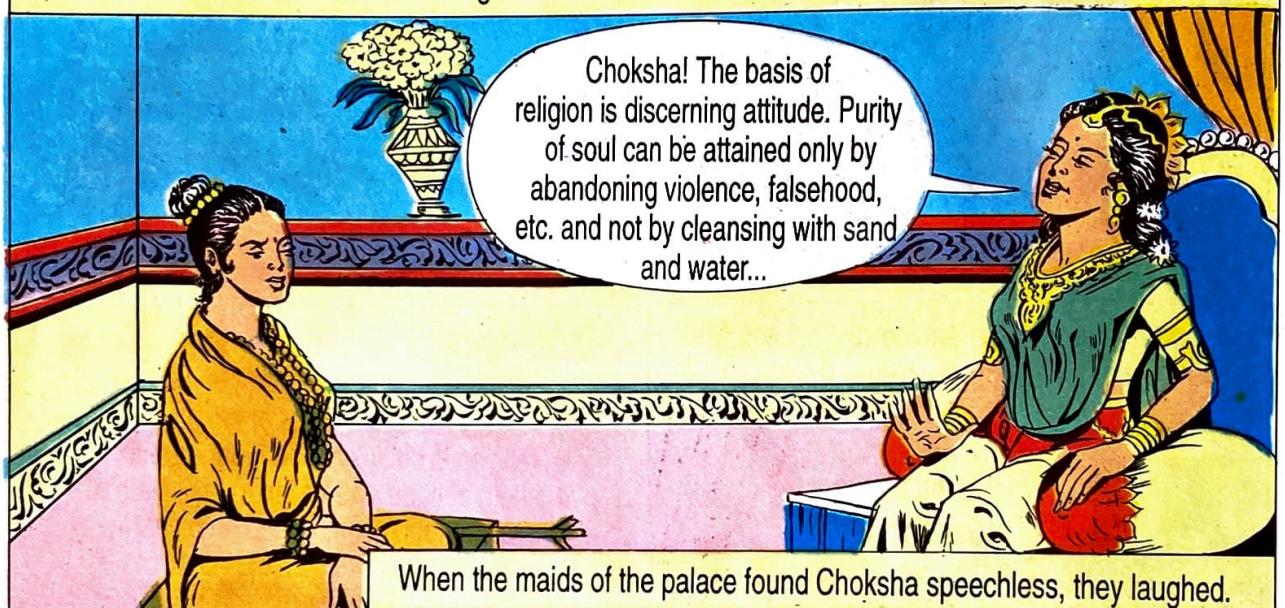


Then how can violence lead to the purification of soul? Because tiny beings are killed when you bathe with water.



Choksha failed to answer the sound logic of Princess Malli and looked down. Princess Malli continued—

Choksha! The basis of religion is discerning attitude. Purity of soul can be attained only by abandoning violence, falsehood, etc. and not by cleansing with sand and water...



When the maids of the palace found Choksha speechless, they laughed.

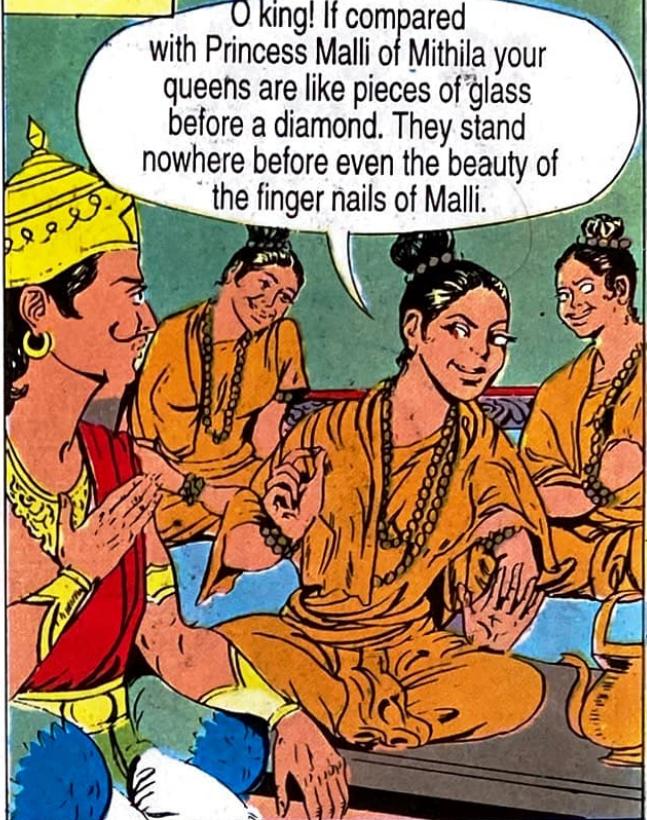
When Choksha saw the maids laughing she lost her temper and got up to leave.

This insult! All right I will teach her a lesson. I will see that she will marry a king who will treat her like a maid...



Insulted and angry Choksha wandered and arrived at the palace of King Jitshatru of Kampilpur. After her preaching the king asked her—

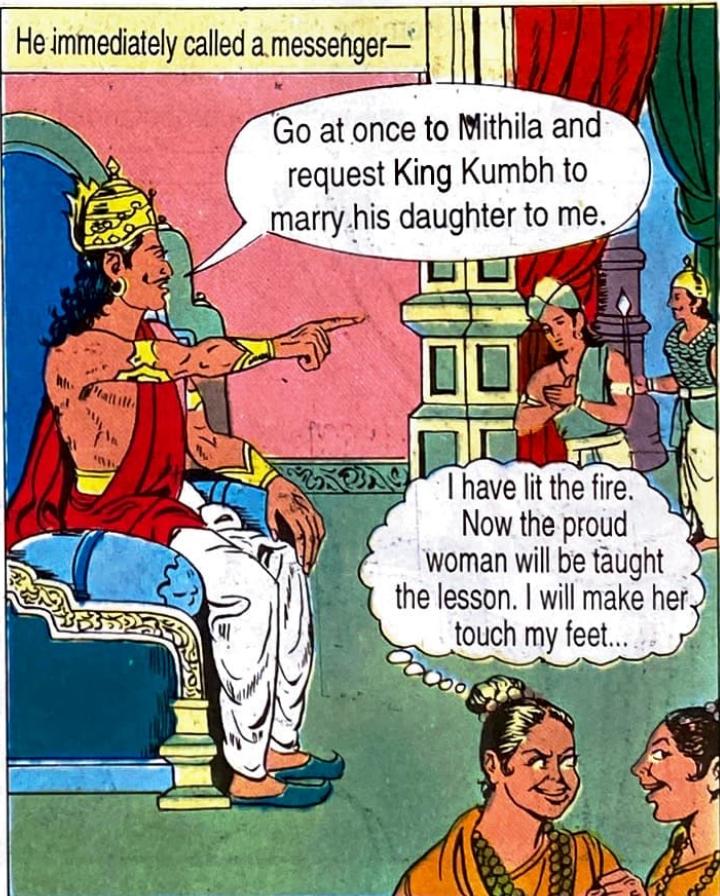
Choksha got this golden opportunity to take revenge against Princess Malli. She said—



When the king heard about the beauty of Malli he was lost into his thoughts—



He immediately called a messenger—



At Mithila one day Princess Malli was sitting alone in her room engrossed in her thoughts. Her ability to see the future made her see it as clearly as a motion picture. She saw—



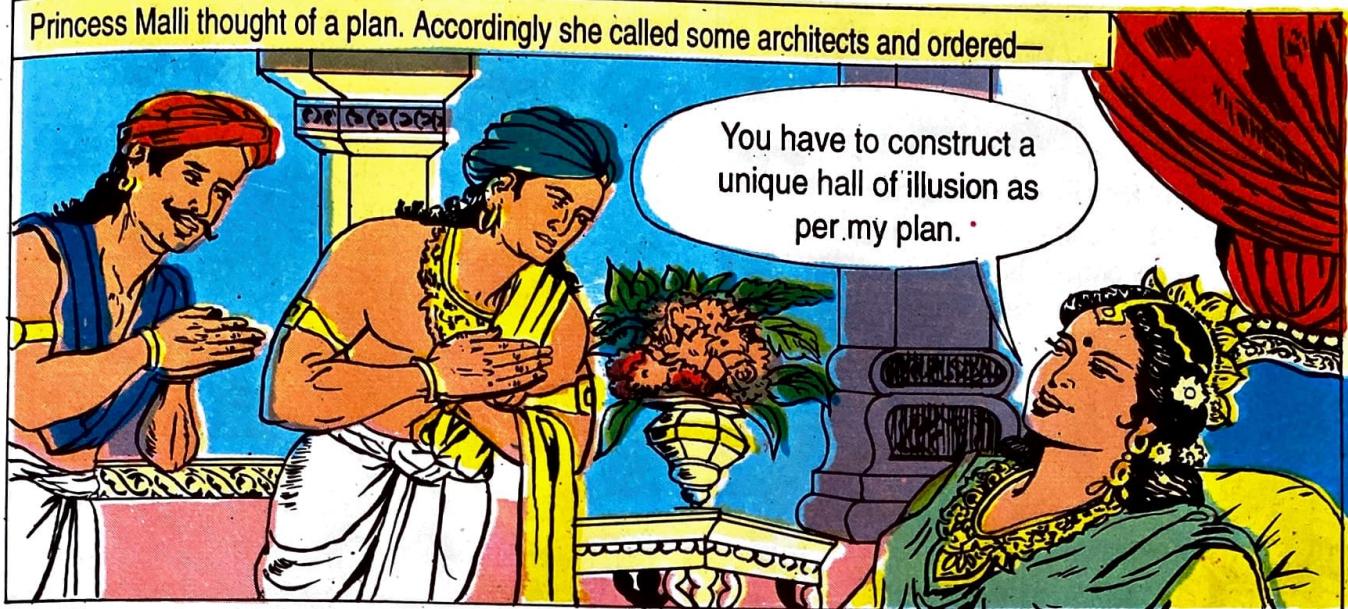
Six messengers from the cities including Saket have arrived with marriage proposals in the court of King Kumbh. The king has rejected these proposals. Consequently the six kings have jointly attacked Mithila. King Kumbh is worried and starts brooding. (The thoughts of Princess Malli)

Princess continued—

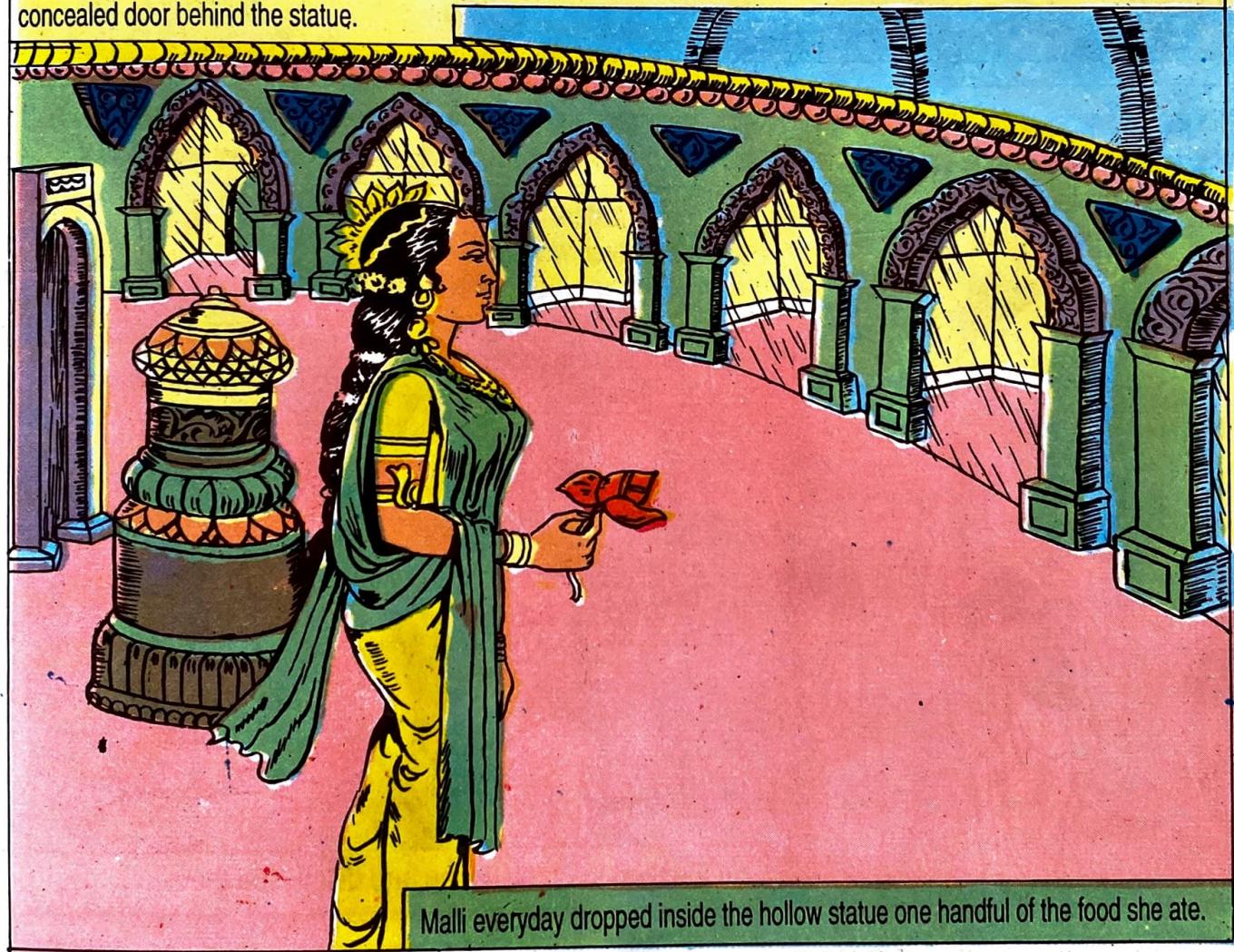
This is sure to happen; so it is better to prepare in advance and work out the solution to the impending problem.



Princess Malli thought of a plan. Accordingly she called some architects and ordered—

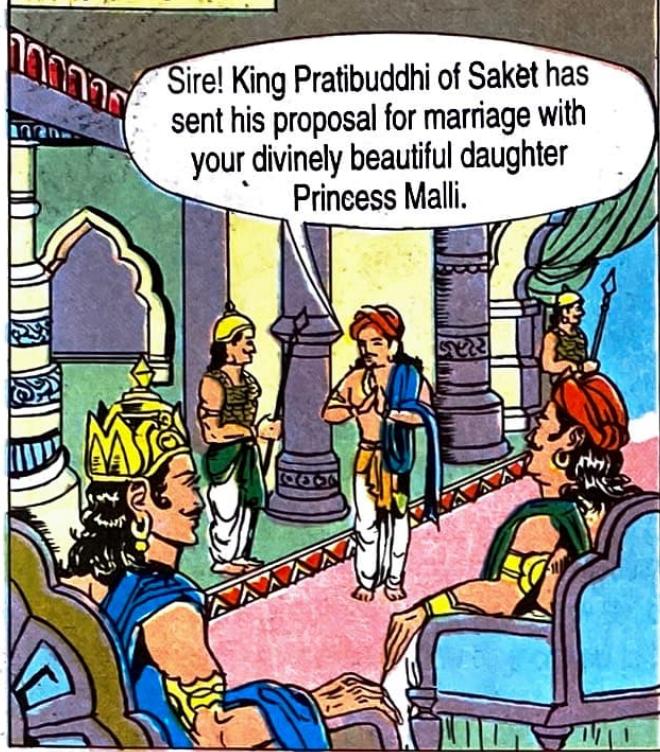


Accordingly a large hall of illusion was constructed. This hall was surrounded by six other rooms opening into the hall and the openings covered with see-through grills. At the center of the hall was installed a life-size statue, an exact replica of Princess Malli in gold. It was hollow and with a hole at the top that was covered with a golden lotus. There was also a concealed door behind the statue.

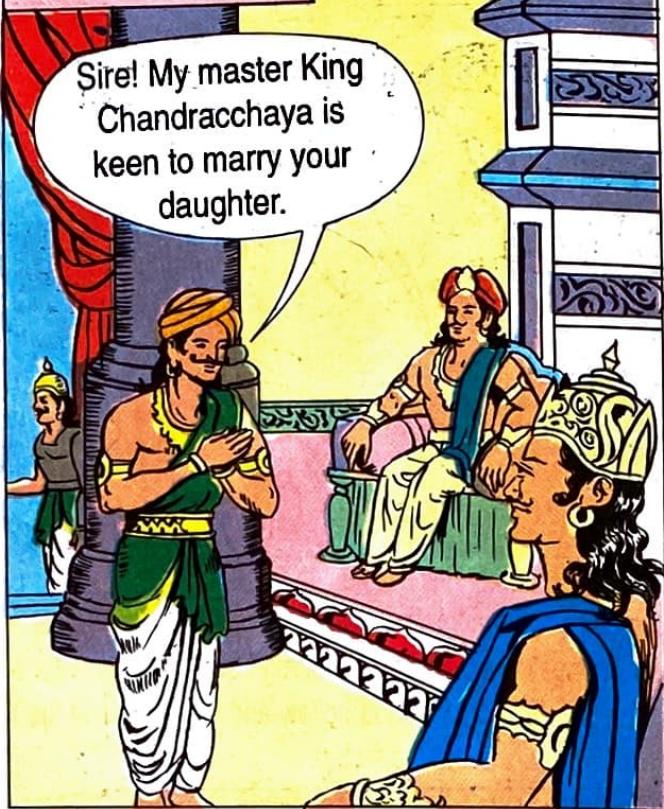


Malli everyday dropped inside the hollow statue one handful of the food she ate.

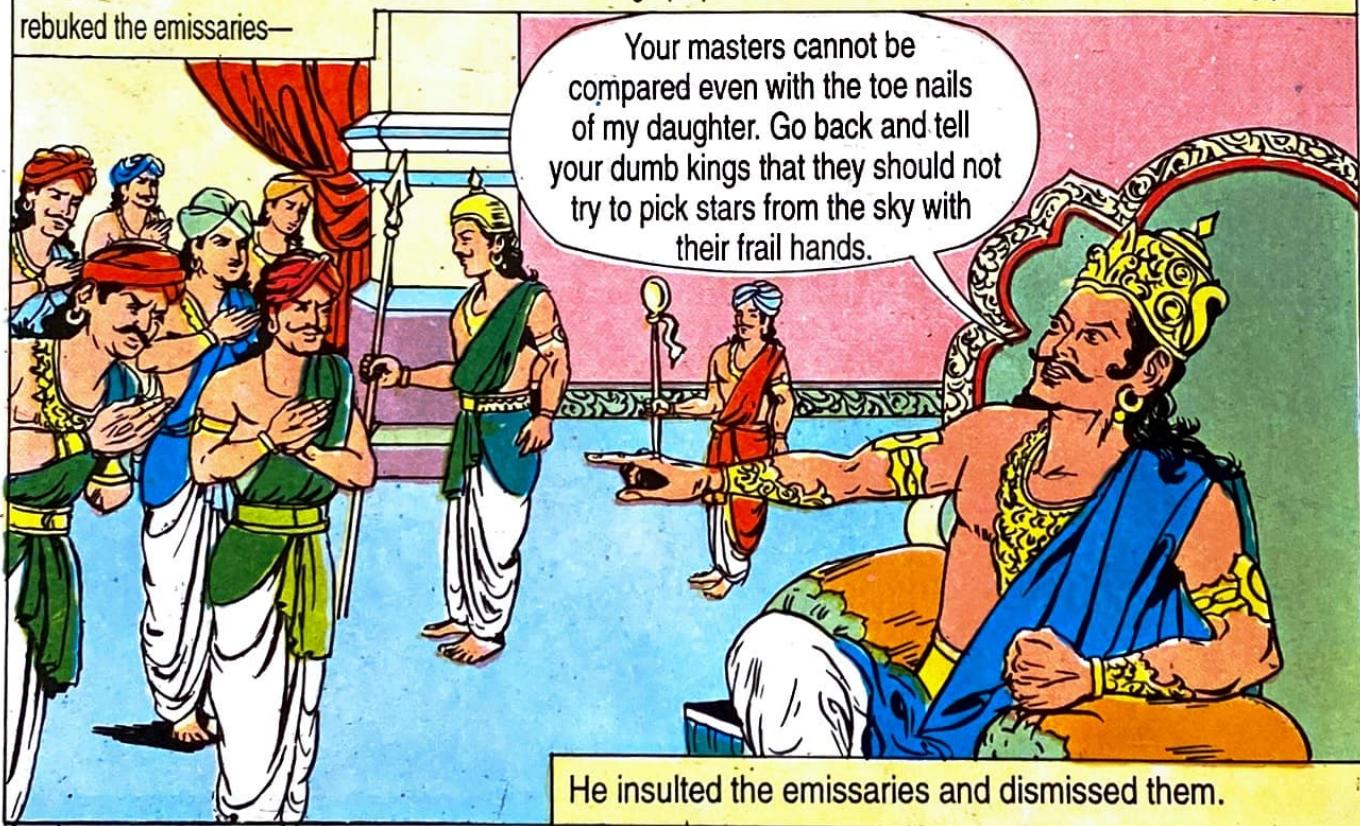
One day while King Kumbh was sitting in his court, the messenger of King Pratibuddhi of Saket entered the court and gave the message of his master—



At the same time the emissary of King Chandracchaya also arrived and conveyed—

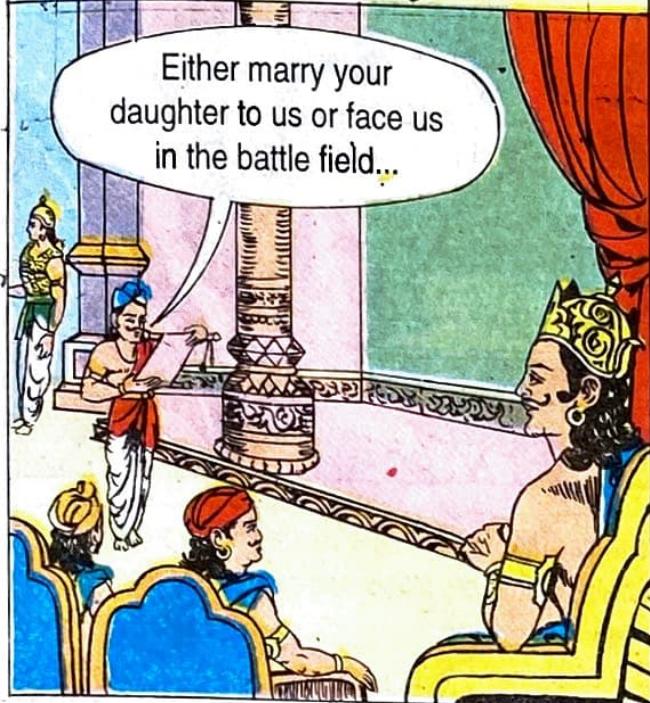


This way emissaries of the rulers of Shravasti, Varanasi, Hastinapur, and Kampilpur also arrived with the marriage proposals for Princess Malli. When he listened to these six marriage proposals one after another, King Kumbh got very angry and rebuked the emissaries—

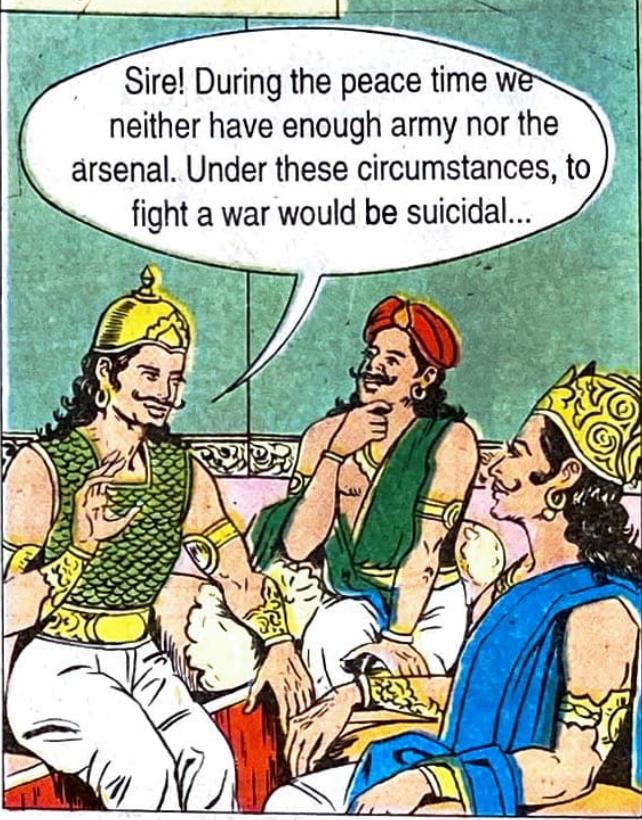


He insulted the emissaries and dismissed them.

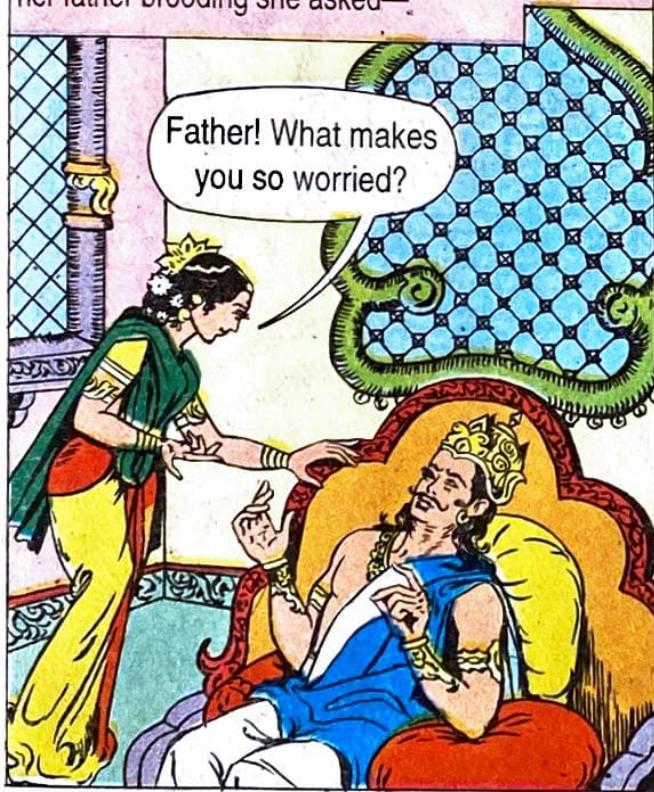
Annoyed by the insult the emissaries gave this news to their respective masters. As a result the six kings jointly attacked. Their armies arrived from six directions and laid a siege of Mithila. They sent their challenge to King Kumbh—



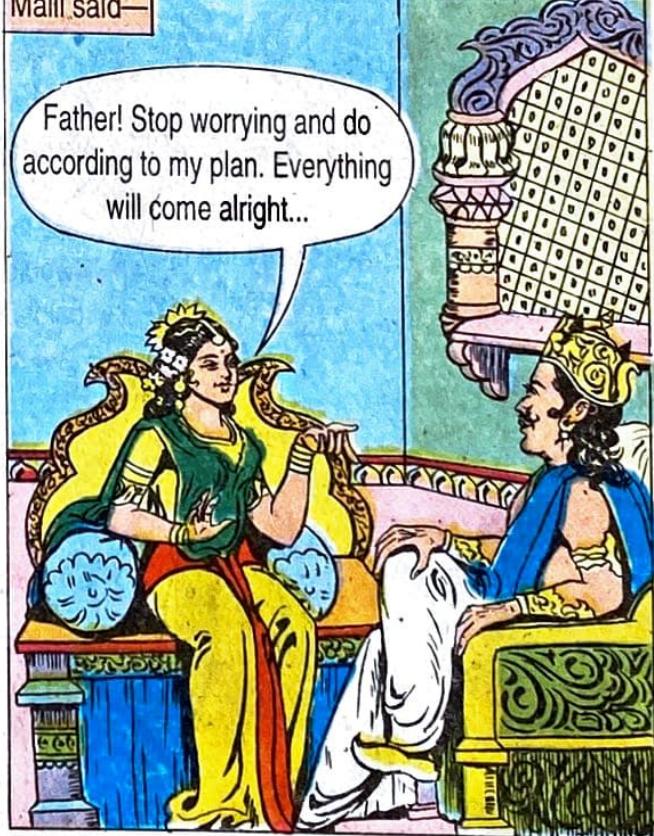
King Kumbh at once called his ministers and commander to a meeting. The commander said—



As there was no honourable and peaceful way out, King Kumbh got worried. When Princess Malli saw her father brooding she asked—



When King Kumbh explained everything Princess Malli said—

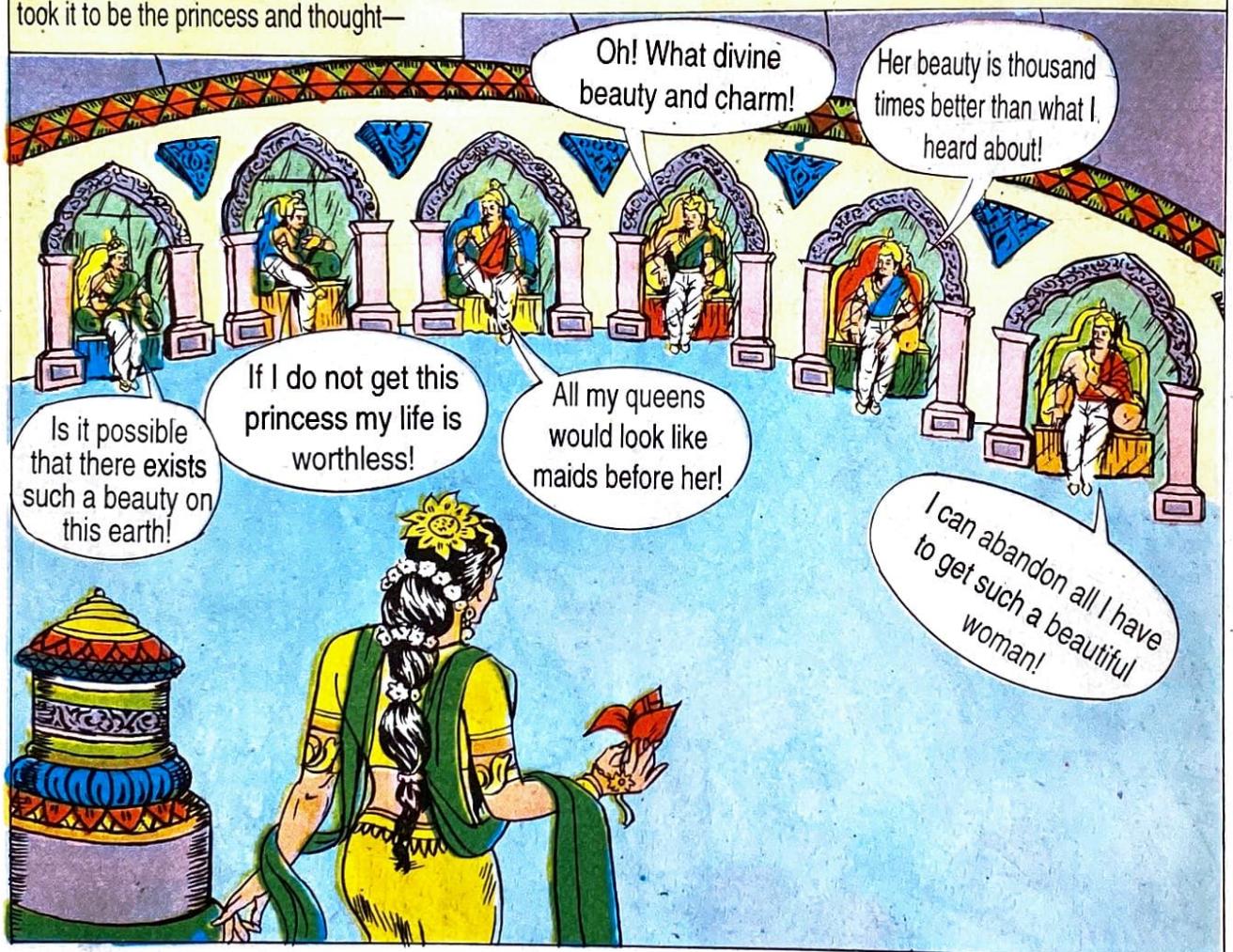


According to the plan of Princess Malli, next day King Kumbh called six messengers and said—

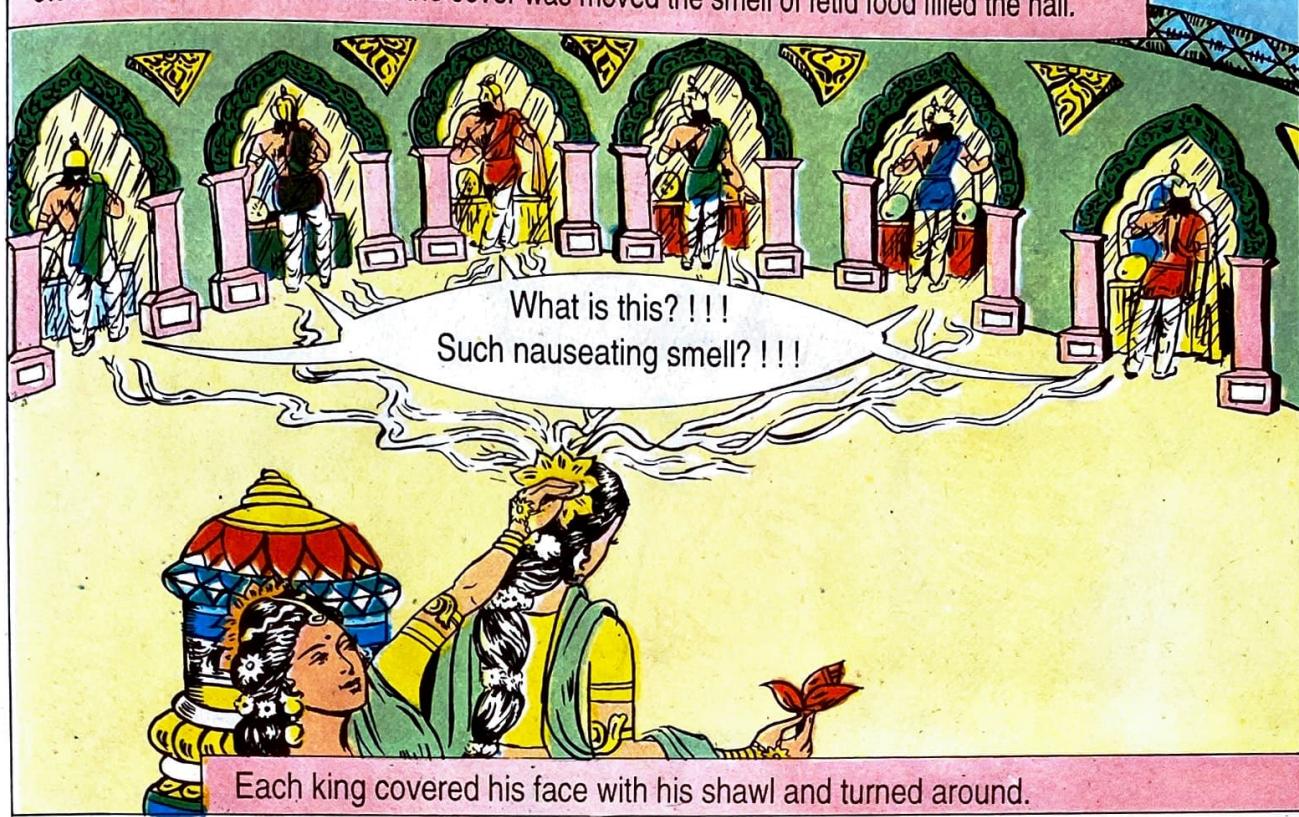
You go separately to the six attacking kings and tell each one of them that your master agrees to marry his daughter to him. But there is a condition that he will have to come alone to the Hall of Illusion in the Ashok garden this evening.



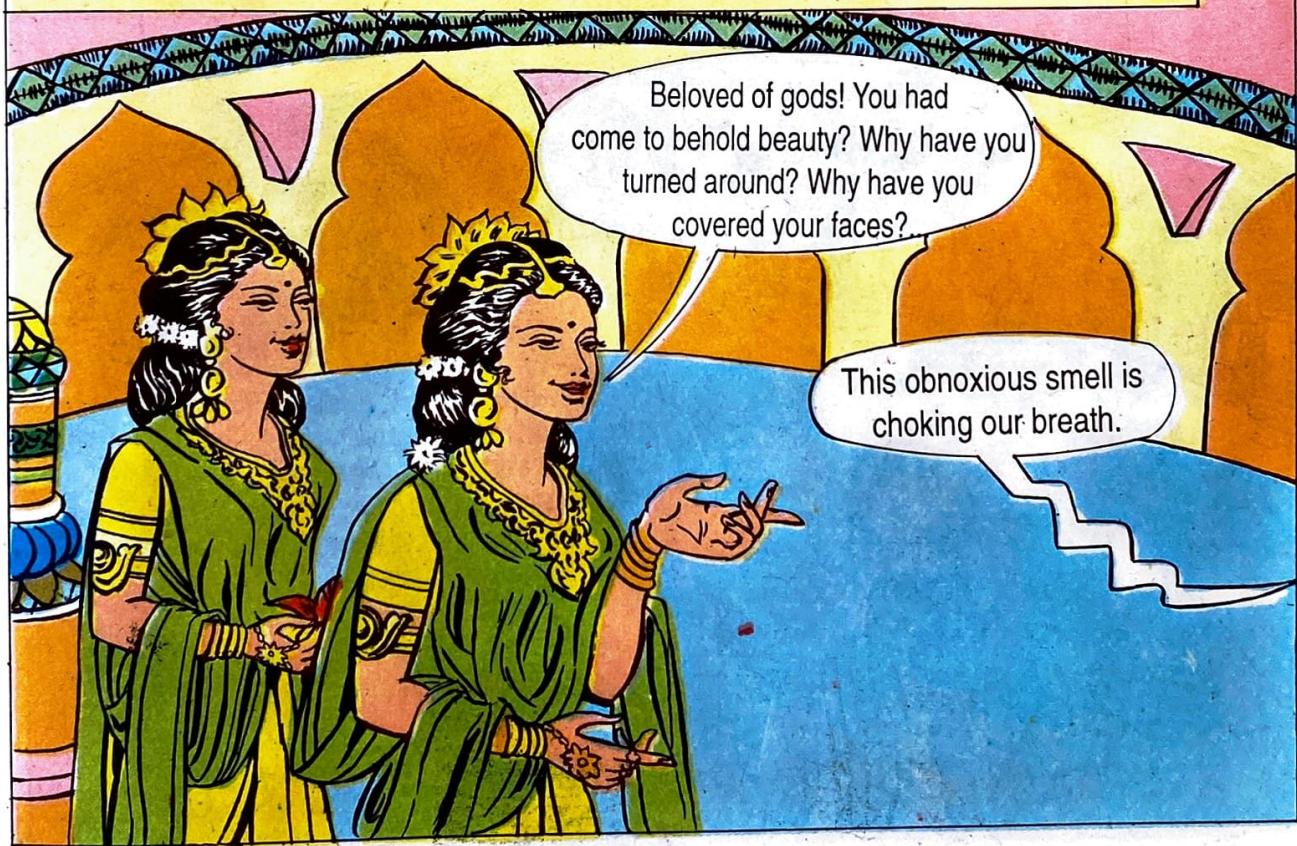
Getting this proposal all the six kings reached the allotted place alone. They were taken separately to the six adjoining rooms. Sitting in the chambers, each king looked at the golden statue of Princess Malli facing each one of them. They took it to be the princess and thought—



Princess Malli entered abruptly from the concealed gate. She removed the cover at the top of the statue and stood on one side. As soon as the cover was moved the smell of fetid food filled the hall.

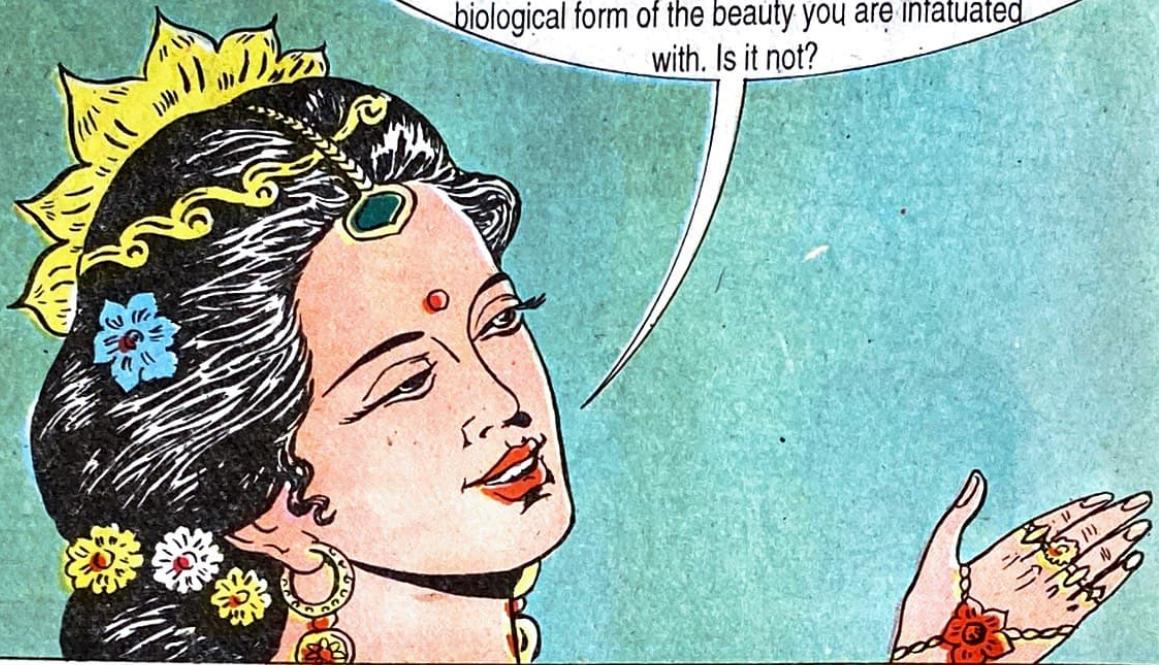


Looking at the miserable condition of the kings, Princess Malli presented herself and addressed the kings—

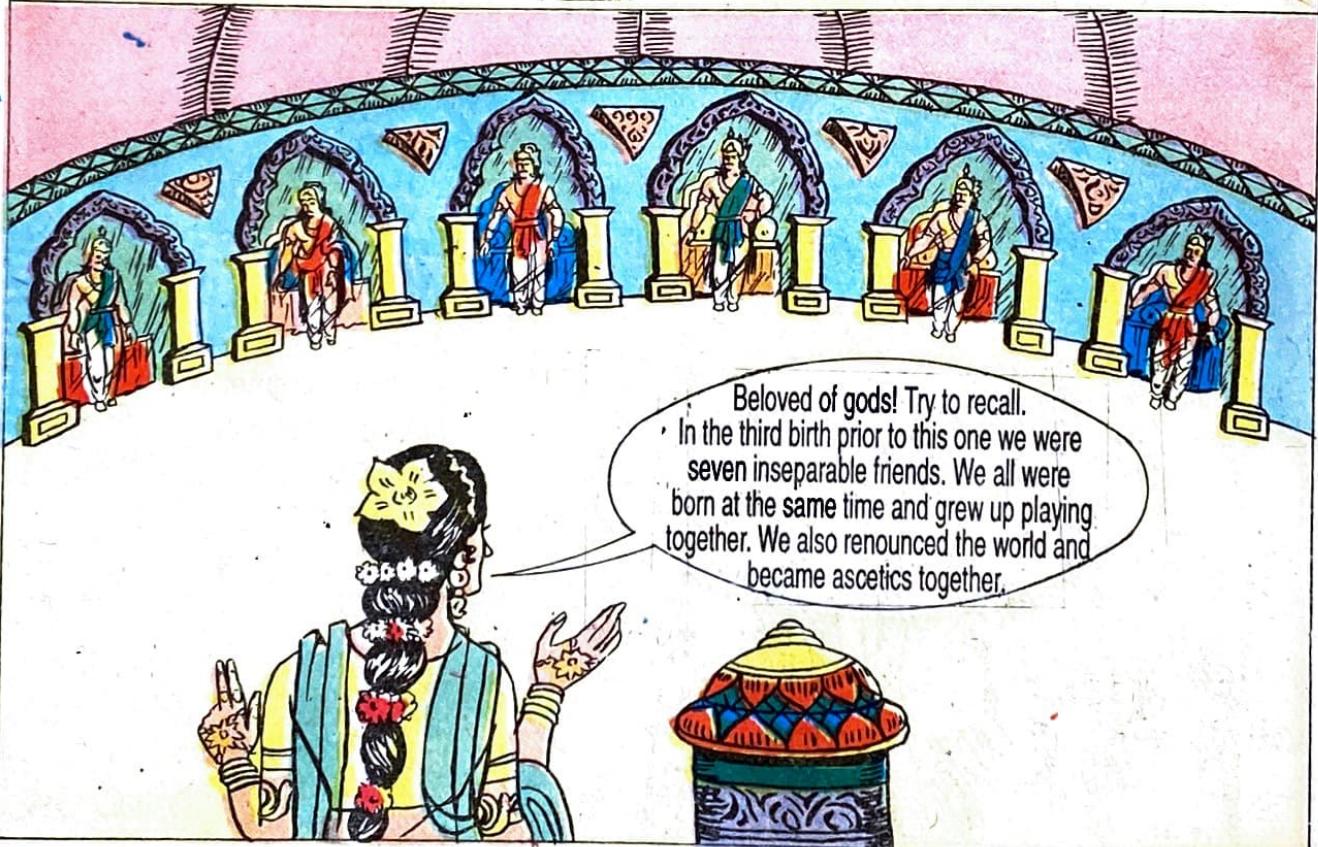


Princess Malli said—

Beloved of gods! Think about this human body with whose beauty you are infatuated. Is it not filled with the same stench? Know that this body is the storehouse of things like excreta - urine - phlegm - etc. Why so much fondness and attachment for it? This is the real inner biological form of the beauty you are infatuated with. Is it not?

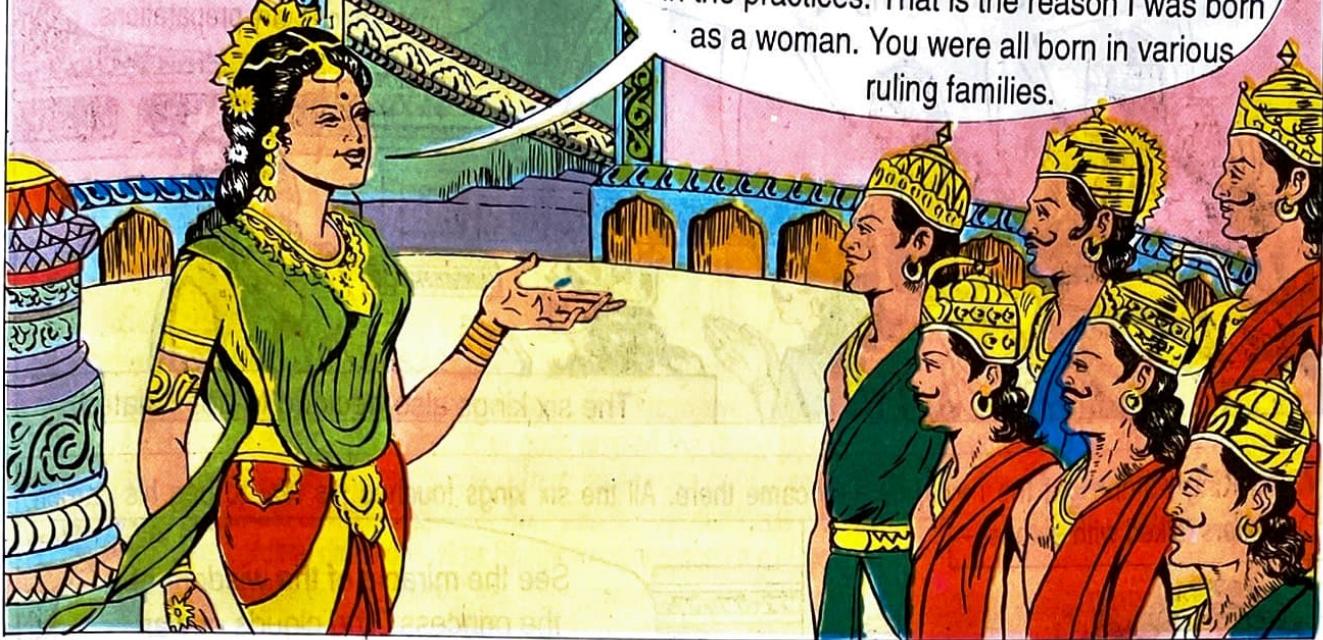


When the six kings listened this statement of Princess Malli they became stock-still. Princess Malli continued—



All the kings were drawn into deep deliberations.
Princess Malli added—

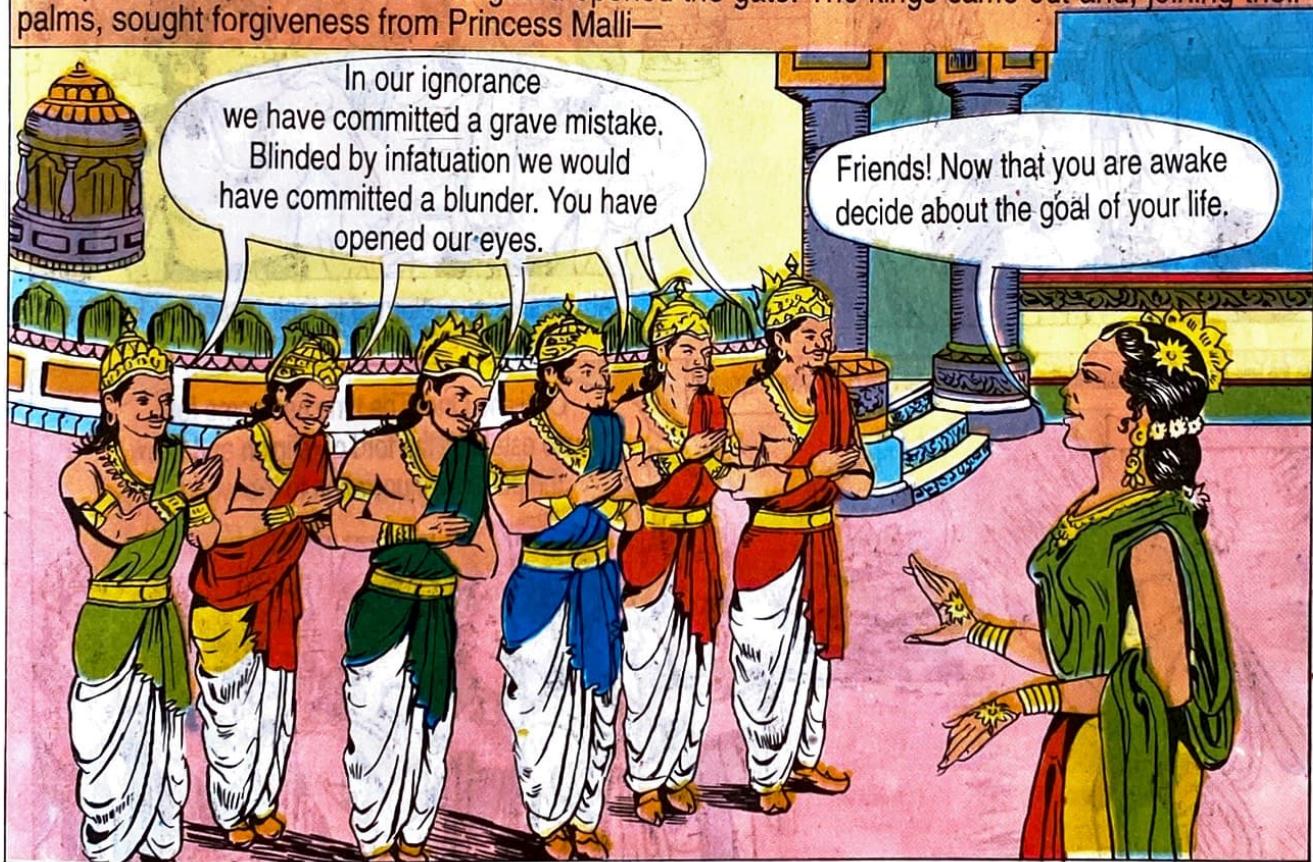
As ascetics we all resolved that we will do same spiritual practices. But, with the intention of surpassing you all, I cheated you in the practices. That is the reason I was born as a woman. You were all born in various ruling families.

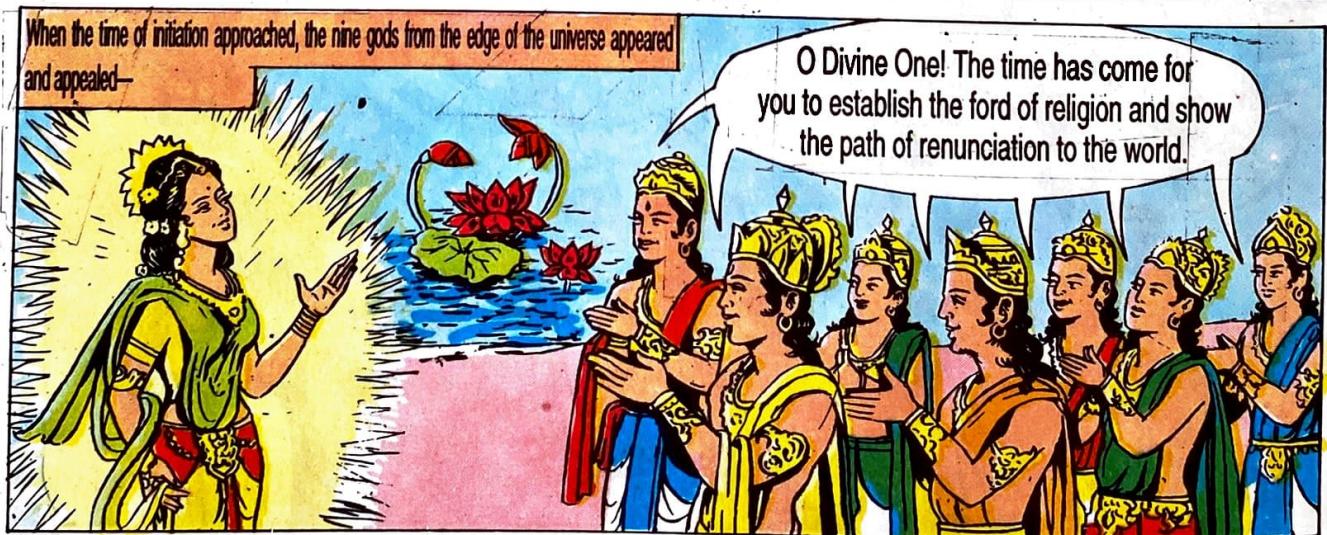
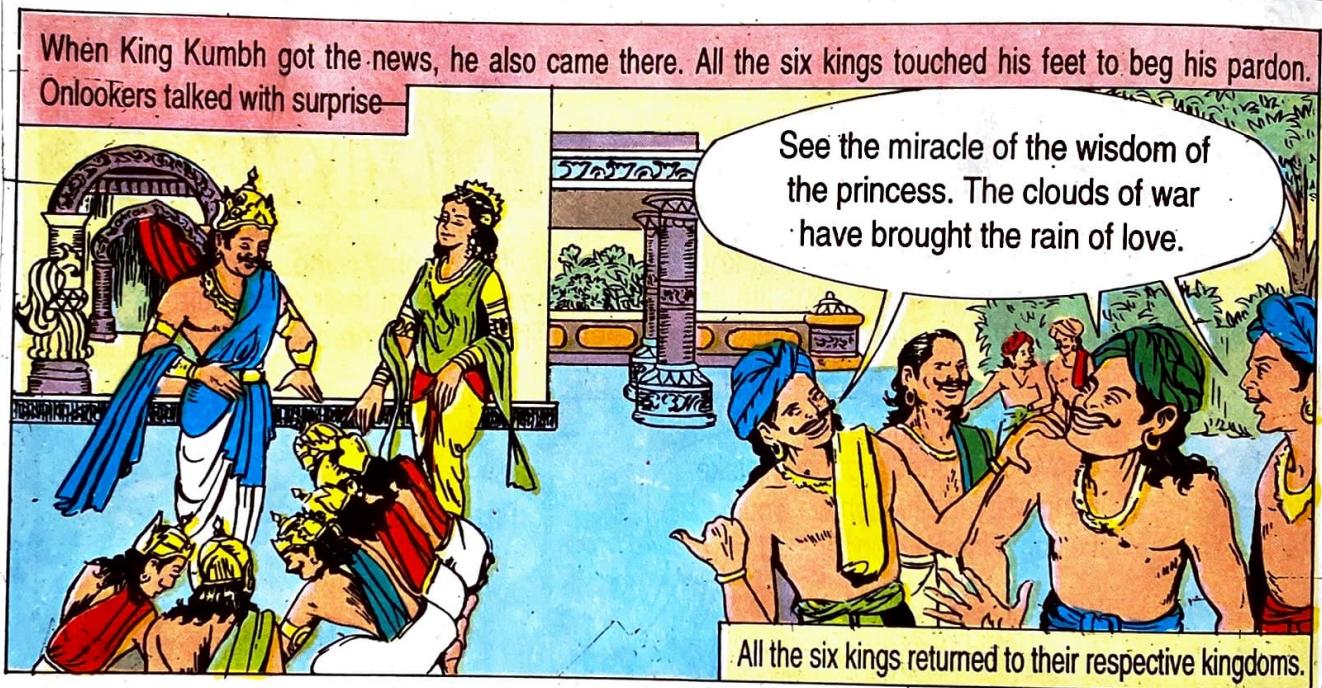
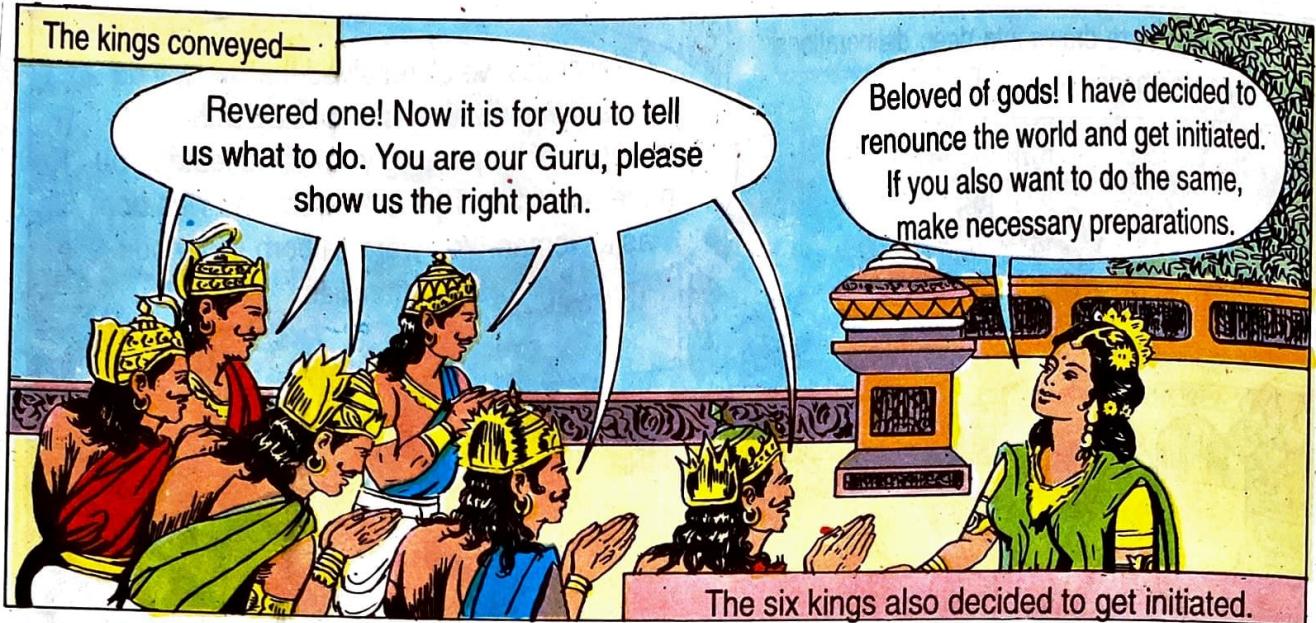


The words of Princess Malli lit the lamps of knowledge within the gloomy minds of the six kings. They acquired the knowledge of previous life and recalled the incident of their earlier births. They all repented for their mistake. The guard opened the gate. The kings came out and, joining their palms, sought forgiveness from Princess Malli—

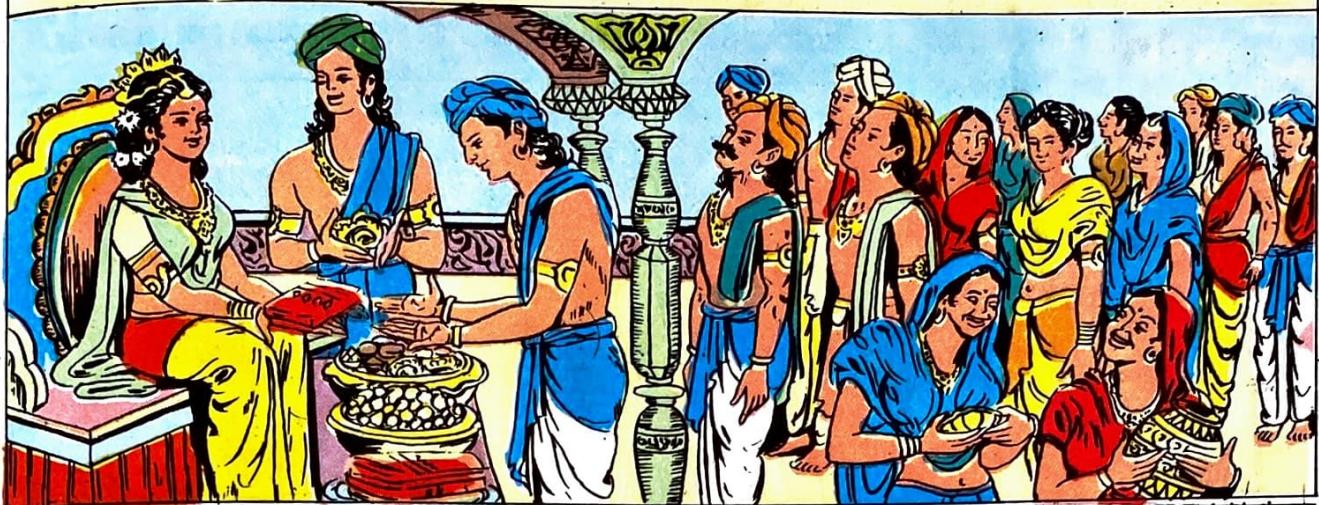
In our ignorance
we have committed a grave mistake.
Blinded by infatuation we would
have committed a blunder. You have
opened our eyes.

Friends! Now that you are awake
decide about the goal of your life.

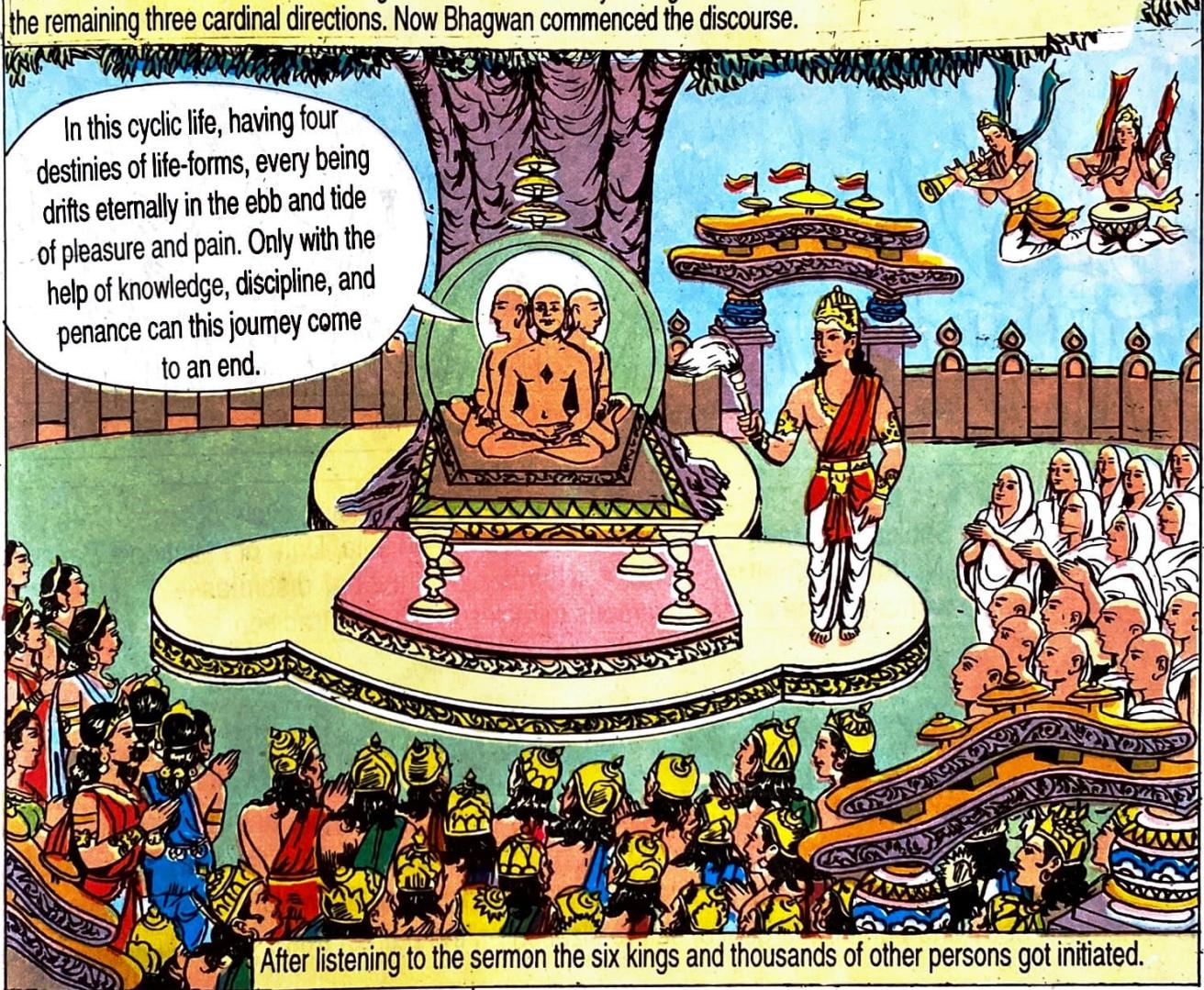




Bhagavati Malli commenced the traditional Charity for one year and removed the miseries of the masses.*



On Margsheersh Shukla eleven, Arhat Malli got initiated along with 300 women and 1000 men. Immediately on initiation Bhagwan Malli acquired the Manahparyav Jnana. The same evening Bhagwan got Kewal Jnana (omniscience) and established the religious ford. Indra and other gods erected the divine pavilion (Samavasaran) with a 300 Dhanush high Chaitya tree. Bhagwan entered this pavilion from its eastern gate, circum-ambulated the Chaitya tree, and uttering 'TIRTHAYA NAMAH'# sat down facing east. After this the Vyantar gods created three divine images of Bhagwan facing the remaining three cardinal directions. Now Bhagwan commenced the discourse.

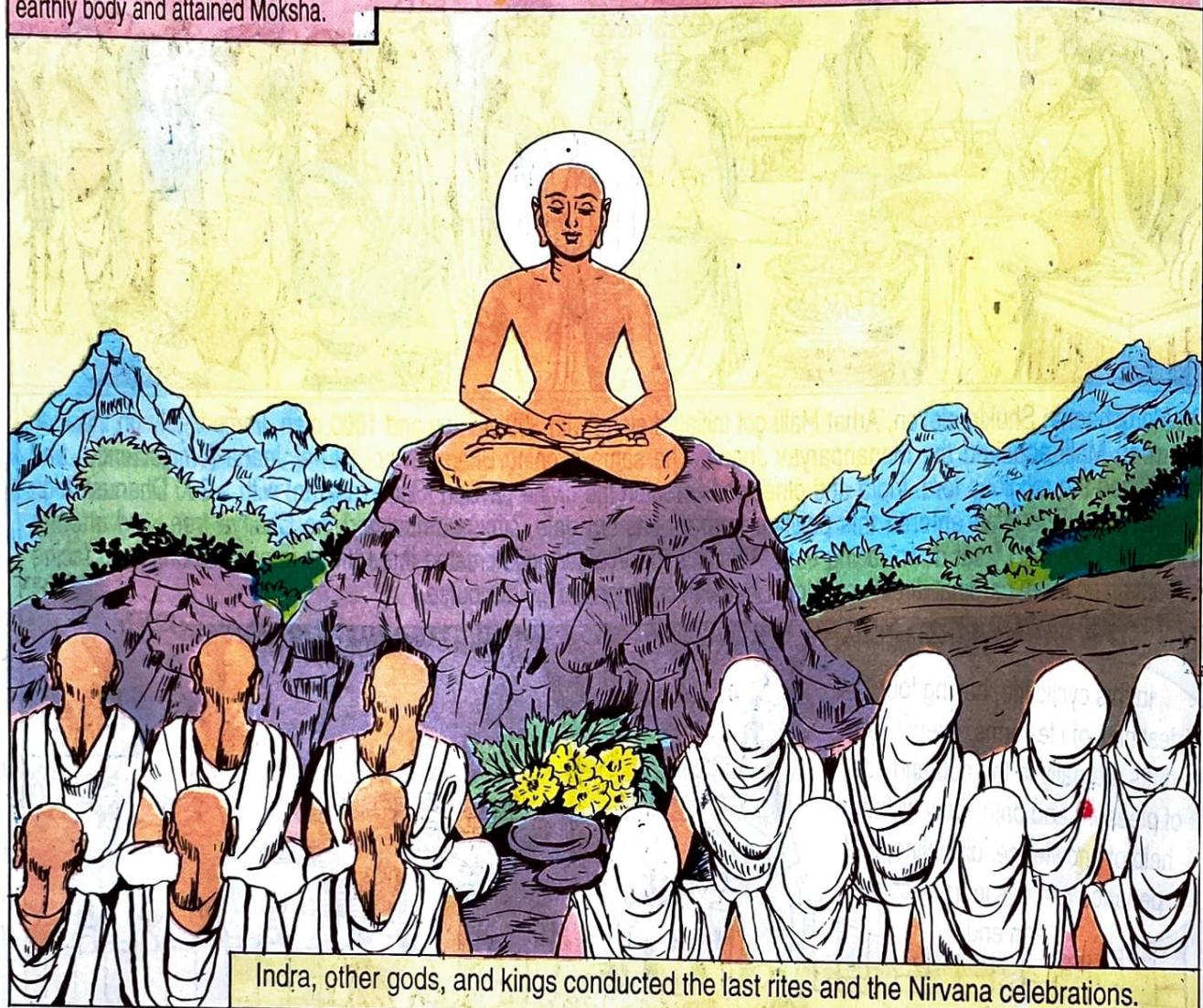


After listening to the sermon the six kings and thousands of other persons got initiated.

* 3.888 billion gold coins were donated during this period.

Salutations to the Religious Ford.

After propagating religion for thousands of years when Bhagwan realized that the last moment is approaching, she did the ultimate penance along with 500 male and 500 female ascetics at Sammetshikhar mountain. In the perfect meditative pose her soul left the earthly body and attained Moksha.



Indra, other gods, and kings conducted the last rites and the Nirvana celebrations.

Bhagwan Mallinath was the 19th Tirthankar of this Avasarpini [descending cycle of time]. Date of birth—Margsheersh Shukla 11 (Maun Ekadashi). Place of birth—Mithila. Date of initiation—Paush Shukla 11. Date of Nirvana—Chaitra Shukla 4. Number of principal disciples—28. Malli, a Tirthankar born as a woman is one of the 10 famous miracles in the Jain tradition.

The story of the earlier birth of Bhagwan Mallinath teaches us to be simple and guileless in our attitude. Even to achieve lofty goals one should not resort to deception. The life as a Tirthankar reveals that the pleasures of the body and its beauty are ephemeral. So we should look beyond this ephemeral body and pursue the goal of self realization on the path of truth.

THE END

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